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ABSTRACT

This monograph illuminates connections among district induction policy, principal leadership, and the nature and quality of mentors' practices and other support experienced by new teachers in Bristol and New Britain, Connecticut, within the context of Connecticut's performance-based licensure system. Chapter 1 introduces the topic. Chapter 2 describes the history of Connecticut's Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) program and the nature of the support and assessment components of the program as of 2000-01. Chapter 3 describes the beginning teacher induction program in Bristol public schools, the nature of senior and peer advisors' practices, and other support experienced by first- and second-year teachers in the district. Chapter 4 describes the beginning teacher induction program in New Britain public schools, the nature of mentors' practices, and other supports provided. This chapter focuses on the role of BEST portfolio scorers in helping second-year teachers apply content-specific instructional knowledge and reflect on their instructional practices. Chapter 5 looks across Bristol, New Britain, and other Connecticut districts to examine how district induction policy shapes the experiences of first- and second-year teachers and shapes new teacher retention. (Contains 24 references.) (SM)

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State and District Policy Related to Mentoring And New Teacher Induction in Connecticut

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on Teaching and America's Future
November 2002

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Chapter I - Introduction

The first years of teaching pose a variety of challenges as novices make the transition from student teaching to assuming full responsibility for classrooms of their own. Beginning teachers must learn school and district policies, establish and maintain productive learning environments, plan units and lessons, translate subject matter knowledge into curriculum appropriate for students, assess students' work, and address individual and cultural differences (Burden, 1990; Huberman, 1993; Veenman, 1984; Vonk, 1993). These challenges are compounded in urban districts by the range of student needs, learning styles, and behaviors as well as such factors as poverty, unemployment, and residential mobility. Further, new teachers in the United States have traditionally experienced professional isolation, with few opportunities to address these challenges with colleagues.

These working conditions cause many beginning teachers to develop coping strategies in order to merely survive in the classroom — strategies which can negatively impact the quality of their instruction, the nature and extent of student learning, and their own ability to learn from their practice (Feiman-Nemser, 1983; Rosenholtz, 1989). These circumstances also contribute to high rates of attrition and migration among new teachers in the U.S. Nationwide, more than one-fifth of public school teachers leave their positions within three years (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997), and studies estimate teacher attrition in the first five years to be 30% or greater (Henke, Chen, & Geis, 2000; Grissmer & Kirby, 1987; Murnane et al., 1991). While few researchers have focused explicitly on turnover among new teachers in urban settings, a number of studies have found that overall turnover rates are higher in urban districts than in other public school systems (Ingersoll, 1999; Murnane et al., 1991; Shen, 1997). Some teachers leave the profession for personal or financial reasons, while others move from one district to another in search of better working conditions.

In order to address concerns over new teacher development and attrition, many districts and states have implemented induction programs over the past decade. These programs match mentors with new teachers and often feature workshops and courses as well as opportunities for new teachers to visit other classrooms and schools. In 1994, more than one-half of all public school teachers with five years of experience or less reported that they had participated in an induction program (Darling-Hammond, 1997). In 2001, 15 states indicated that all of their beginning public school teachers participated in induction programs and several other states were serving most new teachers and/or planning to expand their induction programs (Education Week, 2002). Despite the widespread implementation of induction programs in the 1990s, there is little understanding among K-12 educators, state legislators, university teacher educators, deans of teacher education institutions, or state higher education officials of how state and district teacher policies impact mentoring and new teacher induction.

This monograph is based on a study of Connecticut's Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) program and examines how local induction policy in two urban districts, Bristol and New Britain – in conjunction with the state's BEST program - affected assistance for beginning teachers during the 2000-01 school year. In Bristol and New Britain, district policy related to induction, teacher evaluation, and compensation seemed to have a strong impact on new teachers' experiences and on new teacher retention. In particular, the study found that:

- In Bristol and New Britain, induction practices combined with high teacher salaries to keep teacher attrition and migration at very low levels; teacher retention was much higher in these districts than in other districts serving students from similar socioeconomic backgrounds.
- In Bristol and New Britain, the high quality of induction support seemed related to district policy related to mentor assignment and work conditions, professional development for second-year teachers, and strong instructional leadership among principals.
- In many schools in Bristol and New Britain, district policy related to teacher evaluation interacted with effective principal leadership to positively influence new teachers' experiences.
- In Bristol, district policy related to mentors' work conditions – especially compensation and release time – appeared to affect the quality of support experienced by new teachers.
- Some districts in Connecticut did not compensate mentors, which tended to discourage experienced teachers from serving in this role, especially when salary supplements were available for serving in other roles such as department chairs, athletic coaches, and student club advisors. Mentors who were not paid seemed to have less incentive to maintain current knowledge of state teaching standards and portfolio requirements or to establish trusting relationships with mentees.

The purpose of the BEST program is to provide new teachers with mentoring and other forms of support during the critical period of their induction into the profession while determining whether they have the pedagogical skills necessary to teach effectively. Each beginning teacher works with a mentor or support team on a regular basis during their first year. Mentors are required to participate in 24 hours of professional development related to new teacher development, the state's teaching standards, and the BEST portfolio assessment process. They are expected to provide instructional support to novices and help them reflect on their practice. With regard to support teams, at least one team member must be a trained BEST mentor, and at least one should have teaching experience in the appropriate content area. In addition to mentoring, Connecticut offers subject-specific seminars to beginning teachers that are designed to familiarize them with the state's teaching standards and the portfolio requirements.

In their second year in the BEST program, new teachers in most content areas must complete a content-specific portfolio designed to assess their pedagogical knowledge and skills. For each portfolio, teachers must complete several entries that are integrated around one or two units of instruction. These entries include a description of their teaching context, a set of lesson plans, two videotapes of instruction during the unit, samples of student work, and teacher commentaries on their planning, instruction, and assessment of student progress. For those teachers whose

performance on the portfolio is judged to be unsatisfactory, they have the opportunity to go through the portfolio process again during their third year of teaching. If their performance on the portfolio remains unsatisfactory, they are ineligible for licensure and are not able to continue teaching in Connecticut.

Connecticut's approach to new teacher induction and assessment is designed to help novices learn to examine student learning, construct and apply subject-specific instructional knowledge, and reflect on their practice. While the state influences beginning teachers' induction experiences by training mentors, offering subject-specific seminars, and requiring second-year teachers to go through the high-stakes portfolio process, new teachers' experiences are also shaped by district policy related to induction. By supplementing the BEST program with a comprehensive array of support activities, a number of districts in Connecticut have fostered high levels of instructional quality. Two such districts, Bristol and New Britain, are featured in this monograph.

In 2000-01, Bristol served approximately 8,868 students, 24.4% of whom received free or reduced-price lunch. In the late-1990s, the district worked with the Bristol Federation of Teachers to increase the standards for earning tenure and to provide a variety of supports for beginning teachers as they go through the portfolio process and work towards tenure. These district supports include senior advisors, peer advisors, professional development activities, and district and school orientations. Each new teacher in Bristol is assigned a peer advisor and a senior advisor. Peer advisors work with one beginning teacher each and must teach in the same content area and grade level as their advisee. They are expected to orient novices to the school context and provide assistance with instructional planning. Senior advisors receive compensation for providing instructional support to three to five beginning teachers over a two-year period as they begin teaching, and later go through the portfolio process during their second year.

First-and second-year teachers in Bristol receive extensive instructional support from their senior and/or peer advisors. The high quality of this support is influenced by district policy related to mentor assignment and mentor compensation. In addition, Bristol's induction program illustrates two other important aspects of high-quality programs. First, the superintendent and the local teachers' union were closely involved in establishing higher standards for earning tenure and developing a support system to retain beginning teachers and help them meet the standards. Second, most principals in the district have been actively involved in facilitating content-specific instructional assistance for beginning teachers.[1]

In 2000-01, New Britain served over 10,295 students, 54.9% of whom received free or reduced-price lunch. The district matches mentors with first-year teachers, and most mentors teach in the same content area and/or grade level as their mentees. Regular workshops are provided for first-year teachers on a range of topics including classroom management, student assessment, parent involvement, student motivation, and the BEST program. New Britain has also made extensive use of teachers and administrators in the district who have scored BEST portfolios for the state in

[1] Content-specific instructional assistance involves helping teachers acquire curricular knowledge and integrate knowledge of subject matter, students, and teaching context in making instructional decisions and reflecting on practice.

supporting second-year teachers as they go through the portfolio process. In particular, scorers have met regularly with second-year teachers to help them understand the state's teaching standards, apply content-specific instructional knowledge, and reflect on their practice through the examination of student work.

The high quality of induction support in New Britain is due in part to district policy related to mentor assignment. New Britain's induction program is also exemplary because the district mentoring facilitator's view of induction – as subject-specific instructional support - is shared by many mentors and administrators, and is reflected in the assistance that scorers have provided to second-year teachers. Further, many school administrators in the district have incorporated aspects of the portfolio process into their teacher evaluation practices.

The range of induction activities in Bristol and New Britain, in combination with high teacher salaries, have led to much lower rates of new teacher attrition and migration compared to other districts in Connecticut that serve students from similar socioeconomic backgrounds. Of those who started teaching in 1998-99 or 1999-2000 in Educational Reference Group (ERG) H districts in Connecticut, 87.3% of those who started in Bristol remained in the district through at least their third year of teaching (See Appendix for an explanation of Educational Reference Groups). In contrast, only 75.8% of those who started teaching in other ERG H districts in 1998-99 or 1999-2000 remained in their district of origin through their third year of teaching. Further, of those who started teaching in 1998-99, 1999-2000, or 2000-01 in ERG H districts, 84.7% of those who started in Bristol were still teaching in the district in 2001-02. In contrast, only 76.4% of those who started teaching in other ERG H districts in 1998-99, 1999-2000, or 2000-01 continued to teach in their district of origin in 2001-02.

Of those who started teaching in 1998-99 or 1999-2000 in ERG I districts in Connecticut, 91.2% of those who started in New Britain remained in the district through at least their third year of teaching. In contrast, only 70.1% of those who started teaching in other ERG I districts in 1998-99 or 1999-2000 remained in their district of origin through their third year of teaching. In addition, of those who started teaching in 1998-99, 1999-2000, or 2000-01 in ERG I districts, 90.2% of those who started in New Britain continued to teach in the district in 2001-02. In contrast, only 71.3% of those who started teaching in other ERG I districts in 1998-99, 1999-2000, or 2000-01 were still teaching in their district of origin in 2001-02.

This monograph illuminates connections among district induction policy, principal leadership, and the nature and quality of mentors' practices and other support experienced by new teachers in Bristol and New Britain, within the context of Connecticut's performance-based licensure system.

Chapter II describes the history of the Connecticut's BEST program and the nature of the support and assessment components of the program as of 2000-01.

Chapter III describes the induction program for beginning teachers in Bristol public schools, the nature of senior and peer advisors' practices, and other support experienced by first- and second-year teachers in the district.

Chapter IV describes the induction program for beginning teachers in New Britain public schools, the nature of mentors' practices, and other support experienced by first- and second-year teachers. This chapter pays particular attention to the role of BEST portfolio scorers in New Britain in helping second-year teachers apply content-specific instructional knowledge and reflect on their instructional practices.

Chapter V looks across Bristol, New Britain, and other districts in Connecticut to examine how district induction policy shapes the experiences of first- and second-year teachers as well as new teacher retention.

Chapter II - Connecticut's Beginning Educator Support and Training Program

Connecticut's Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) program grew out of the Education Enhancement Act (EEA) of 1986 and companion legislation, which themselves were the culmination of attempts by two commissioners of education, Mark Shedd and Gerald Tirozzi, to raise teacher licensure standards and make school spending more equitable. This chapter describes the efforts of Shedd and Tirozzi to address state policy issues related to teacher quality as well as the EEA's impact on teacher salaries and licensure standards. These efforts also resulted in the establishment of Connecticut's first performance-based teacher assessment, the Connecticut Competency Instrument. This chapter explores the subsequent evolution of the BEST program and its support component, and the recent implementation of portfolios in making licensure decisions.

History of Teacher Policy Reforms in Connecticut

As commissioner of education from 1974 to 1983, Mark Shedd has been credited with transforming the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) from a passive, decentralized state bureaucracy into a proactive agency that became strongly involved in formulating educational policy (Fisk, 1999). He actively recruited staff from leading research universities with expertise in such areas as law, public policy, measurement, and social science research. Shedd also helped put in place the necessary infrastructure for collecting and analyzing data on educational resources and student achievement. As a result, under his leadership, CSDE developed the capacity to design and implement educational policies and conduct research and evaluation on them (Wilson, Darling-Hammond, & Berry, 2001). Further, the agency began to advocate for a more equitable distribution of school funding and for improvements in teacher quality.

Along with Shedd's efforts, a landmark lawsuit in 1974 contributed to increased CSDE influence on state policy. The *Horton v. Meskill* case found that Connecticut's system for funding public education severely limited the state's ability to provide a high quality education for all children (Wilson, Darling-Hammond, & Berry, 2001). *Horton v. Meskill* eventually led to changes in the state's school funding system and greater ability on the part of CSDE and local school districts to plan, implement, and evaluate school programs. In the decision, the neediest school districts in Connecticut were designated as Priority School Districts (based on low levels of student achievement and family income and other factors) and targeted for additional resources through a series of categorical grants. At the same time, the emphasis on program implementation and evaluation implied that increased funding alone would not be sufficient to eliminate inequities in educational opportunity; standards, resources, and capacity at the local level would also be necessary (Fisk, 1999).

Believing that teacher quality was a central aspect of local capacity, Shedd created a committee representing 45 professional groups in the late-1970s to examine issues related to teacher professional development. In 1981, this committee issued a report that addressed four primary teacher quality issues: recruitment, initial preparation, induction, and continuing professional development. Five other committees were subsequently established to make more focused recommendations related to these issues. Although Shedd resigned in 1983, the work of these

committees provided a starting point for Shedd's successor, Gerald Tirozzi. Within three months of becoming commissioner, Tirozzi released *Connecticut's Challenge: An Agenda for Educational Equity and Excellence* (Connecticut State Board of Education, 1984). This report recommended changes in teacher preparation, licensure, and professional development; longer kindergarten classes and a lower mandatory school age; improvements in remedial, vocational, and adult education; and mastery tests for 4th-, 6th-, and 8th-graders to be used as low-stakes tools for increasing information to school districts.

In an effort to advance this policy agenda, Tirozzi asked then Governor William O'Neill to create a Commission on Equality and Excellence in Education (CEEE), which would be supported by CSDE. Arthur Wise, director of the RAND Corporation's Center for the Study of the Teaching Profession, was hired as the chief consultant to the commission. Hiring Wise helped link Connecticut with national conversations among researchers and policy makers about teacher professionalism. The CEEE's report, *Teachers for Today and Tomorrow* (1985), had a dual focus on incentives and increased standards for teachers. In particular, the report called for several incentives to recruit and retain teachers including a higher minimum salary, a voluntary state-funded program to increase teacher salaries at all levels, an induction program for beginning teachers, local grant funds for career ladder programs, and differentiated staffing (Fisk, 1999). The proposed standards included changes in licensure requirements, statewide teacher assessments, and more rigorous local evaluation programs.

The CEEE's report eventually resulted in passage of PA 86-1, An Act Concerning Education Enhancement, as well as subsequent legislation, PA 86-147, An Act Concerning the Phase-In of Testing for Beginning Teachers. The Education Enhancement Act (EEA), as PA 86-1 was known, and its companion bill provided state "salary grants" to raise teacher salaries and make them more equitable across districts. The average teacher's salary increased dramatically over a five-year period from $29,437 in 1986 to $47,823 in 1991 (Prowda, 1998), and the state salary grants were allocated on an equalizing basis to help low-resource districts compete for qualified teachers. Salary grants were determined on the basis of the number of fully certified teachers in each district, thereby providing an incentive for districts to hire qualified teachers. In addition, the state took steps to ensure a sufficient supply of qualified teachers by offering scholarships and loan-forgiveness to attract high-ability teacher candidates and to encourage well-qualified teachers from other states to come to Connecticut (Wilson, Darling-Hammond, & Berry, 2001).

The EEA and PA 86-147 also significantly increased teaching standards in Connecticut through the creation of a three-tiered licensure system featuring levels of beginning, provisional, and professional licensure (Wilson, Darling-Hammond, & Berry, 2001). In order to earn a beginning license, candidates were required to earn an academic major in the subject to be taught and to pass tests of basic skills and subject matter. First-year teachers were required to participate in a support and assessment program that eventually became known as the BEST program, and the state required all beginning teachers to be assigned to trained mentors. For their part, experienced teachers were required to complete 30 credits of course work (later increased to a master's degree) to earn their professional license, and nine credits every five years for license renewal.

Implementation of Basic Skills and Subject Matter Tests, and Assessments of Teaching

Skill

Prior to the enactment of the Education Enhancement Act and its companion legislation, CSDE began developing a series of assessments for beginning teachers. The assessments included a test of basic literacy and numeracy skills, tests of subject matter knowledge, and a performance-based assessment of teaching knowledge and skills that was complemented by induction support. Each of these assessments is briefly described.

In the early 1980s, CSDE developed a test of basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics that became known as the Connecticut Competency Examination for Prospective Teachers (CONNCEPT). The test was developed in collaboration with National Evaluation Systems (NES) and administered to teacher education program applicants for the first time in 1985. In 1987-88, following passage of the EEA, all candidates applying for a beginning license were required to pass CONNCEPT, although those with a combined SAT score above 1000 could apply for a waiver. This requirement signified that the state would only admit into teaching those individuals who could demonstrate mastery of basic skills and knowledge.

As the Educational Testing Service (ETS) continued to develop assessments for beginning teachers, Connecticut changed its basic skills test in the mid-1990s from CONNCEPT to Praxis I. Like CONNCEPT, Praxis I measures basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics but unlike the state's test, it comes in two versions: a paper-and-pencil test and a computerized version. Both versions include multiple-choice questions and an essay question. In contrast to the paper-and-pencil version, the computerized version is adaptive, in that questions are selected for candidates based on their responses to earlier questions, and enables candidates to select single or multiple responses and to construct their own answers (Porter, Youngs, & Odden, 2001).

Along with CONNCEPT, the state developed a subject matter examination for elementary teachers, the Connecticut Elementary Certification Test (CONNECT), in the late-1980s. By 1990-91, all candidates for a beginning elementary license were required to pass CONNECT while all candidates for beginning secondary licenses had to pass National Teacher Examination subject matter tests. The state now requires all teachers to pass the Praxis II core content area examinations developed by ETS, which are two hours in length and feature multiple-choice questions.

At the same time that they were developing and implementing CONNCEPT and CONNECT, CSDE staff were collaborating with experienced teachers and teacher educators to create an assessment of teaching performance, which became known as the Connecticut Competency Instrument (CCI). The CCI was pilot-tested in 1988 and used in making provisional licensure decisions from 1989 to 2000. Like teacher observation instruments developed in other states in the 1980s, the CCI was designed to measure generic teaching competencies. The state adopted the Connecticut Teaching Competencies in 1984 for use in approving teacher education programs. Ten indicators of effective teaching behavior, based on the 15 competencies, were established in the domains of management, instruction, and assessment and used to assess teachers' performance on the CCI. This meant that the standards for teacher education program approval in Connecticut were aligned with the expectations for first-year teachers seeking

provisional licensure.

For the CCI, all first-year teachers were required to demonstrate proficiency in the competencies during a series of observations and interviews conducted by assessors trained by CSDE to use the assessment. Teachers, administrators, and teacher educators all served as assessors. For each observation, an assessor scripted teacher and student behaviors during a lesson and carried out brief pre- and post-observation interviews with the teacher. Following the observation, the assessor sorted evidence by indicator and determined whether or not the teacher's performance was satisfactory on each of the 10 indicators. Six observations were planned for each beginning teacher although teachers who performed exceptionally well during the first three or four had the remaining ones waived. Each first-year teacher was assigned to a mentor or support team, and all mentors were required to participate in 24 hours of professional development that addressed the needs of beginning teachers, the Connecticut Teaching Competencies, and the procedures for the CCI. Mentors provided support related to management, instruction, and assessment, but they did not evaluate their mentees.

Compared to paper-and-pencil tests of pedagogical knowledge and skills, the CCI provided significantly more information about a teacher's ability to establish a productive learning environment, plan and deliver instruction, and monitor student learning. Connecticut's performance assessment also differed significantly from those used in other states in that "it was comprised of only ten broad indicators of teacher quality and it employed a holistic scoring system relying on the professional judgment of trained state assessors from outside the district of the beginning teacher" (Fisk, 1999, p.153). Further, it was based on a number of assumptions about teaching that were reflected in few other assessments. These included the notions that effective teaching can be carried out in many ways, critical aspects of teaching can be identified across diverse teaching contexts, effective teaching takes account of cultural diversity, teaching must be assessed in the context of a teacher's intentions, and professional judgment is integral to teacher assessment (CSDE, 1998).

The use of the CCI had far-reaching effects on education in Connecticut in the 1990s. The assessment and support components of the BEST program bolstered new teacher development while also helping mentors and assessors to improve their own instructional practices (Baron, 1999). Many principals across the state were trained as CCI assessors and most districts incorporated aspects of the CCI indicators into their local evaluation programs. At the same time, CSDE recognized some limitations in the instrument. In particular, it did not provide information about a teacher's abilities to plan instruction across an entire unit; integrate knowledge of subject matter, students, and context in making instructional decisions; or reflect on their practice. Consequently, CSDE initiated efforts in the early-1990s to develop assessments that would better measure teacher knowledge, skills, and performance than the CCI and other existing instruments.

Under the leadership of Raymond Pecheone, Connecticut took a principal role in working with other states through the Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) to develop content-specific portfolios for use in making licensure decisions. Groups of teachers and teacher educators were assembled by CSDE in the early-1990s to devise teaching standards in several content areas. In 1995-96, CSDE staff began piloting portfolios in mathematics,

science, and English/language arts and by 2000-01, the state had implemented subject-specific portfolios for use in making licensure decisions in several content areas.

Support Component of BEST Program

With the implementation of portfolios in several content areas in recent years, the BEST program has become a two-year program of support and assessment. All new teachers are assigned a BEST mentor or support team for at least one year and beginning teachers attend content-specific seminars in their first and second years of teaching. In their second year, teachers in most content areas must successfully complete a content-specific portfolio in order to earn their provisional license.

BEST Support Teacher Training. As of 2000-01, mentors were required by the state to participate in three days (24 hours) of BEST support teacher training. Training is provided at several Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) and in a number of districts around Connecticut and facilitated by experienced mentors, teacher educators, and/or BEST regional field staff.[2] The BEST support teacher training involves a variety of activities including large and small group discussions, work in pairs, video presentations, and written reflections. The training addresses a range of topics related to mentoring including the needs of beginning teachers, the Connecticut teaching standards, and the BEST portfolio requirements. Participants discuss strategies for establishing trust, instructional coaching, promoting reflective inquiry, relating instructional practice to the teaching standards, and providing portfolio-related support. The following vignettes illustrate the ways in which some of these topics were addressed during three days of training at one site prior to the 2000-01 school year:

> On the first day, the facilitators divided the 40 participants into four groups and asked them to reflect back on when they entered teaching and to consider what it's like to be a new teacher. After brainstorming in smaller groups, they returned to the large group and shared their perceptions. Some mentioned that beginning teachers often feel isolated, anxious, and overwhelmed. Others noted that novices typically have questions about curriculum, instructional materials, discipline, and communication with parents. This led into a discussion about the ways in which mentors and other experienced teachers can support new teachers. One participant felt it was important to "talk with them about the fact that learning to teach is a process." Another added that new teachers should be informed about "resources that they have a right to expect." A third commented, "Set them straight about rules and procedures in your building, and let them know you are available to answer their questions."
>
> In the morning of the second day, one of the facilitators led the group in a conversation about strategies for establishing trust. Participants considered the importance of developing rapport with mentees, listening actively, demonstrating respect for their ideas, being in regular contact, and maintaining confidentiality. The group then discussed different types of reflection. These included examining the teacher's objectives for a given lesson or unit, the extent to which and ways in

[2] The RESCs are intermediate units designed to bridge the gap between CSDE and local school districts.

which the objectives were met, and what, if any, modifications would be made in teaching the same lesson or unit in the future. After the facilitators role-played a conversation between a mentor and mentee, participants noted characteristics of the conversation that made it reflective. One commented, "The mentee did most of the talking. The mentor was listening actively and affirming how the mentee felt." Another added, "The mentor tried to get the mentee to do most of what she needed to do for herself."

On the third day, participants were divided into groups based on the content areas in which they taught. Each group was asked to select one of the state teaching standards in their content area and to brainstorm ways in which a teacher could demonstrate proficiency with regard to that standard. A group of social studies teachers chose the standard related to civic competence. They identified several instructional activities that teachers could implement including units on elections; units on the histories and accomplishments of different racial and ethnic groups represented in the school and community; service learning projects; and an emphasis on current events. After each small group presented to the large group, the facilitators noted the ways in which the portfolio components provided content-specific evidence of teachers' abilities to align learning objectives and instructional activities, plan and deliver instruction, evaluate student learning, and analyze their teaching. Five participants who recently went through the portfolio process then discussed their experiences developing portfolios and the value for beginning teachers of attending the state seminars.

According to one experienced mentor in New Britain, the support teacher training emphasized "asking people open-ended questions to have them reflect on the lesson. Also, setting the tone. It's like you're doing a lesson when you're conferencing with people. You're setting the tone. You're trying to be empathetic as well as you realize that people are in just different stages." In her work with beginning teachers, this mentor has gotten "to know when it feels OK to move forward with something and when I should just hang back a little bit and let that person talk some more. Try to get in a few ideas or points, always something positive, anything I could find and sometimes it was hard."

Connecticut revised the support teacher training for 2001-02 so that prospective mentors attended two-and-a-half days of training in summer 2001 that addressed many of the same topics covered in the three-day trainings offered through summer 2000. In fall 2001, these mentors attended half-day content-specific sessions provided by RESCs that focused on the teaching standards and portfolio requirements in their particular content areas. In total, they participated in three days (24 hours) of training. These half-day sessions were also open to experienced mentors to provide them with information about changes in the portfolios.

A senior advisor in Bristol described a mentor update session conducted by a member of the BEST regional field staff in his district: "She brought portfolios for all the different groups. We looked at videos and compared portfolios. She said that a lot of times the videotaped lesson is not consistent with the lesson plans or written commentaries. You read the synopsis and you say, 'Wait a minute. Is this the same as this?'" He added, "We did get to see the portfolios and

worksheets, and a lot of each portfolio was the material they used during the unit. I think the Bristol session worked out well."

Roles of Mentors. Mentors in Connecticut provide a range of support for first- and second-year teachers. Many mentors meet regularly with first-year teachers to plan instruction and reflect with them on their practice, to address concerns about classroom management, and to provide information about school and district procedures. Some also observe or videotape first-year teachers' classroom instruction and analyze their teaching and student learning with them. Some mentors also work closely with second-year teachers as they go through the portfolio process. Most mentors in the state teach full-time which affects the amount of time they have for mentoring. Nonetheless, the vast majority of mentors play an important role in promoting new teacher development. The following excerpts from interviews with mentors in Bristol and New Britain illustrate different ways in which mentors address instructional issues and promote reflective inquiry among first-year teachers and provide portfolio-related support to second-year teachers:

> My goals have pretty much stayed the same, concentrating on identifying effective teaching practices, and exploring ways to establish a good rapport with students. I try to sense the things she might ask about, or may be having some difficulty with . . . My idea is to get them to think about why they are doing something – "How are you going to present it? What kinds of materials are you going to need? What are your expectations and how are you going to convey those to the students?" I want the mentees to focus on questions such as, "What is your objective here? How are you going to measure whether they are getting that done? What kinds of things are you going to bring in? What are some things that might motivate them?"
>
> I'd rather not give information to my mentee; I'd rather it be a collaborative effort where we discuss the difficulties that each of us are having: "You have this idea; OK, let me tell you what my experience is with it. Let's see if we can come to some solution that will help to overcome whatever difficulty I may have had" . . . After observations, I will ask "How did you feel the lesson went?" Then I might ask more pointed questions like, "What happened with this situation that I observed? Is there any background to that? Is there anything that is bothering you about the way the lesson went?" I'm trying to be as non-judgmental as possible.
>
> I said to her, "Do one page of your daily log." And then I was able to give her feedback – looking at that page – because then you're no longer talking about hypothetical teaching situations. I told her, "These objectives look exactly the same as your instructional strategies. Your objectives don't need to be worded that specifically. The objective is the overall goal of what you are going to do" . . . Then I looked at her reflections. It was kind of funny because as I was looking through her instructional strategies, I made a note and said "Why wouldn't you elicit these from the kids?" Ironically, she wrote at the end of her reflection as I flipped the page, "I think I made it too easy. The next time I would elicit from the

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kids . . ." When you sit down and look at the actual work that someone has done on their portfolio, it makes a big difference.

BEST Seminars. In the mid-1990s, the state started providing a series of content-specific seminars on the state teaching standards and portfolio requirements for first- and second-year teachers. The seminars are designed by teachers-in-residence (see below for more information) and facilitated by teachers, administrators, and teacher educators who are trained to score portfolios. In most content areas, the seminars address such topics as aligning unit and lesson objectives, instructional strategies, and assessments; linking analyses of student learning to analyses of teaching; creating inquiry-based lessons; developing portfolios; and reviewing model portfolios. The seminars provide an important opportunity for beginning teachers to learn more about the BEST program and to meet colleagues from other schools and districts who teach in the same content areas. The following excerpts from seminars in elementary education and science reflect the types of seminar activities that are common in most content areas.

> The facilitator, an elementary principal and portfolio scorer, divided the 20 first-year teachers into groups of four and asked each group to select one of the elementary teaching standards and discuss what it means and how it can be demonstrated. The groups considered standards related to curriculum; habits of mind; development, learning, and motivation; and aspects of personal character. Later in the session, the participants considered how different learning tasks promote different levels of thinking, understanding, and engagement. After discussing a low-level task in which students were given eight words and asked to write a story, they examined a performance task designed to elicit higher-order thinking and high levels of engagement. The facilitator concluded the session by mentioning several ways that first-year teachers could begin to prepare for their portfolios. These included developing sequential learning opportunities, videotaping and analyzing their instruction, communicating evaluation criteria to students, and reflecting on their practice.

> One of the facilitators, a biology teacher and portfolio scorer, wrote the following question on a blackboard at the start of the seminar: "What is 'inquiry-based' learning?" For the next three hours, the 25 participants discussed a variety of ways to transform units in biology, chemistry, physics, and earth science into inquiry-oriented units. For example, one group developed the outline for a unit on toxic waste in which the students would study "the filthy five" power plants in Connecticut and examine ways to reduce air pollution. They would investigate how power plants produce air pollution, its potential effects on living organisms and the environment, and the scientific principles and costs underlying potential solutions. At the end of the seminar, the facilitators discussed several characteristics of inquiry-oriented science activities. These included having students develop their own questions and utilize outside resources, having students formulate their own opinions based on scientific evidence, linking scientific study to technology and/or society, and having students generate a product and/or share their ideas or findings with others.

Several teachers commented on BEST seminars they had attended. One first-year social studies teacher stated that the seminars were "extremely helpful. They showed examples. The facilitators were very friendly. There were two teachers" facilitating who had actually done portfolios. "One was older, but he went through the process of creating a portfolio. He said that he did it just so he'd know what it would be like." Another first-year teacher felt the two English/language arts seminars he had attended "were useful. I thought they were good – both of them. They showed a sample video. They told us what we'd have to do for our portfolio. They gave us an example of a lesson that we might do – a technique that we might use." A second-year elementary school teacher added, "I found them to be helpful because I saw examples of videotapes and got to ask questions of people that went through the program. It set my mind at ease."

In 2001-02, CSDE enacted changes in the format of the BEST seminars. The state continued to offer two live seminars -- one for teachers in the spring of their first year and one for teachers in the fall of their second year. The remaining seminars were offered on-line through a distance learning format. While moving several of the seminars in each content area to distance learning reduced teachers' opportunities to get to know their facilitators and peers, it greatly increased access to the seminars for a large number of teachers. In previous years, many first- and second-year teachers had been unable to attend seminars because of time and location. Although the format of the seminars changed, the content has remained the same in most subject areas.

District Facilitators. Each school district in Connecticut is required by the state to identify an educator to serve as district facilitator. These individuals are responsible for ensuring that each first-year teacher in their district is assigned to a trained BEST mentor within 10 days of their hire or assignment. At the start of the school year, each district facilitator must provide an orientation to the BEST program for beginning teachers and mentors. District facilitators are expected to inform principals about the BEST program and their role in placing beginning teachers with mentors or support teams, monitor the effectiveness of mentors and support teams, and coordinate resources for second-year teachers as they go through the BEST portfolio process. District facilitators are also involved in recruiting experienced teachers to serve as mentors and portfolio scorers, selecting mentors and nominating portfolio scorers, and arranging professional development for first- and second-year teachers. Finally, these administrators are responsible for placing student teachers with cooperating teachers in their district. In medium and large districts, assistant superintendents, instructional supervisors, directors of curriculum, and directors of professional development typically serve as district facilitators. In smaller districts, principals and assistant principals often assume this role.

In Bristol, for example, Denise Carabetta serves as instructional supervisor for grades PreK-5 as well as district facilitator. Prior to assuming her current position, she served as supervisor of pupil personnel services for many years in the district. As instructional supervisor, Carabetta is responsible for overseeing curriculum and instruction in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. In addition to her responsibilities as district facilitator, she places student teachers with cooperating teachers and, along with other central office administrators, assists building principals in the supervision of non-tenured teachers. As district facilitator, Carabetta has played a critical role in Bristol's efforts to provide high-quality induction support to all first- and second-year teachers. As discussed in Chapter III, the district's innovative induction program is

based in large part on the fact that Bristol's superintendent, Ann Clark; Carabetta; and other central office staff share a set of strong beliefs about supporting and evaluating new teachers, and have enacted a set of policies that reflect those beliefs.

In New Britain, Vanda O'Reilly is the assistant superintendent for instructional services and has served as district facilitator since 1988. As assistant superintendent, she oversees the departments of instruction and pupil services, working closely with the directors of instruction and pupil services as well as content area coordinators. In her words, the responsibility for serving as district facilitator "traveled with me through various central office positions. The reason it did was simply that it is so involved, it's just easier to continue with that, given my background and understanding, rather than to farm it out to someone else. It is a tremendously time-consuming job considering the other responsibilities that I have." As discussed in Chapter IV, the quality and comprehensiveness of New Britain's induction program is due in large measure to O'Reilly's strong leadership. Despite the district's size and the number of new teachers hired in recent years, she makes persistent efforts to get to know each beginning teacher and ensure that their needs are addressed.

BEST Regional Field Staff. There are one to two BEST regional field staff at each of the RESCs. These individuals are experienced, accomplished teachers who are highly skilled at providing professional development for new and veteran teachers. Regional field staff devote up to 50% of their professional time to working with the BEST program and they work directly with district facilitators. When someone is new to the position of district facilitator, a regional field staff person meets with them for an hour to 90 minutes to discuss the BEST program, their responsibilities as district facilitator, and available services from the RESCs. In addition, regional field staff are available on an ongoing basis to answer questions from district facilitators, address problems, and identify other sources of support.

One regional field staff person noted that she helps district facilitators implement the BEST program "by answering questions or concerns regarding a beginning teacher's situation, by clarifying aspects of the program that affect the district, and by providing an avenue to make suggestions or voice concerns . . . In order to better understand the process, I score science portfolios and lead seminars." Another added that "as field staff for the RESCs, we have many jobs so the people in districts have gotten to know us in a variety of capacities. It's not just that we represent the BEST program. I think it has an impact on their perceptions of us, their willingness to talk to us and work with us."

Regional field staff provide BEST mentor training, mentor update training, orientations to the BEST program for first- and second-year teachers, sessions on videotaping for the portfolio, and administrator training. While mentor training usually lasts two-and-a-half to three days, regional field staff sometimes provide it over six to eight sessions to veteran teachers from the same district (or from a group of neighboring districts). At the orientations to the BEST program, regional field staff discuss the role of BEST mentors and support teams, the timetable for attending state BEST seminars, and the portfolio requirements. The sessions on videotaping are intended for second-year teachers and educators who plan to assist with videotaping lessons for the portfolio. Administrator training sessions last up to three hours and address the CCT, including teaching standards in different content areas, and the portfolio requirements. These

sessions provide opportunities for principals, assistant principals, superintendents, and other central office administrators to acquire a thorough understanding of the BEST program. Examples of completed portfolios are shared and discussed at all of the trainings provided by regional field staff.

Teachers-in-Residence. An important aspect of the BEST program is CSDE's ongoing efforts to involve expert classroom teachers in designing the content-specific seminars for first- and second-year teachers and in the development and scoring of the portfolios. There are one to two teachers-in-residence (TIRs) for each licensure area in which second-year teachers are required to complete portfolios. TIRs are experienced, accomplished teachers who work full-time for two years for CSDE; while they are working for CSDE, their salaries are paid by their districts. TIRs are responsible for coordinating BEST portfolio scorer training and portfolio scoring sessions and for coordinating BEST seminars for first- and second-year teachers. In addition, TIRs respond by phone and e-mail to numerous questions and concerns from second-year teachers as they go through the portfolio process. Most often, TIRs answer questions about the content and format of the portfolios. The following vignette provides some insights into the background and responsibilities of one TIR.

> In 1999-2000 and 2000-01, Alicia Willett served as a TIR in social studies. Certified in social studies in 1982, Willett has 17 years of teaching experience at the middle school and high school levels. She first became involved with the BEST program in the mid-1990s when she was named to the committee that wrote the state's teaching standards in social studies. She later helped develop the social studies portfolio and served as a seminar leader and portfolio scorer. As TIR, she shared responsibilities with CSDE staff related to the development and implementation of the BEST portfolios and seminars. In her words, "It's really important that beginning teachers and mentors are able to contact colleagues at the state who can help them with the process. We bring the classroom experience to the job, we understand the realities of the classroom and of school culture . . . having veteran teachers, who have been involved in the process for a long time, brings a lot of credibility to the program."

Through a variety of individuals and activities including BEST mentors, support teams, district facilitators, BEST regional field staff, and teachers-in-residence, the BEST program provides instructional support related to the state teaching standards and offers guidance on portfolio requirements to first- and second-year teachers.

Assessment Component of BEST Program

Connecticut's attempts to develop content-specific performance assessments to replace the CCI originated more than a decade ago. In the late-1980s and early-1990s, CSDE staff were involved in three national efforts to devise new ways of evaluating teacher performance (Pecheone & Stansbury, 1996). They collaborated with Lee Shulman at Stanford University in his pioneering work on teacher assessment. In conjunction with researchers at the University of Pittsburgh, CSDE staff were awarded a contract to create a prototype assessment for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). Connecticut also began working in 1993-94 with nine other states through INTASC (a group of more than 30 states known as the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium) to develop content-specific portfolio assessments. During the past decade, the state has piloted and implemented portfolios in ten licensure areas.

For each licensure area, Connecticut has attempted to link its teaching standards to student learning standards. In the area of elementary education, for example, CSDE staff initially drew on research on pedagogy for novice learners and existing student standards documents to draft a set of guiding principles. A group of exemplary elementary teachers and teacher educators from the state then used the guiding principles, the INTASC core teaching standards, and the NBPTS standards in Early Childhood and Middle Childhood to write Connecticut's elementary teaching standards. Their work resulted in a set of standards that was consistent with the student content standards advocated by national organizations as well as the state's student assessment program. Efforts in other licensure areas also "began with the development of teaching standards grounded in a relatively well focused set of student learning standards and research on content pedagogy in each content area" (Pecheone & Stansbury, 1996, p.167).

In 1999, the state adopted a revised CCT that includes content-specific teaching standards for each of ten licensure areas. This version of the CCT is based on Connecticut's student standards and describes the knowledge and skills teachers should have in order to help students meet the learning standards embodied in Connecticut's Common Core of Learning (CCL). The CCL, revised in 1998, contains an ambitious vision for student learning, delineating the knowledge, skills, and aspects of character that students are expected to acquire. Compared to the Connecticut Teaching Competencies, which it replaced, the CCT represents a significant advance in that it reflects the complex, discipline-based nature of teaching. While the Competencies were concerned with the implementation of teaching routines, the CCT focuses more on using knowledge of students, content, and context as a basis for pedagogical decisions.

The state's new standards imply that teaching should be evaluated in relation to student learning rather than on the basis of teaching behaviors alone, and that teacher assessments should be content-specific as opposed to applying to all subject areas (Wilson, Darling-Hammond, & Berry, 2001).

As of 2000-01, second-year teachers in Connecticut in the following areas were required to complete portfolios: English/language arts (E/LA), mathematics, science, social studies, elementary education, special education, middle grades, visual arts, music, and physical education. This meant that more than 95% of new teachers in the state had to meet the portfolio requirement in order to earn a provisional license. In addition, portfolios were piloted in 2000-

01 in world languages and bilingual education. At the same time, first-year teachers in areas where portfolios had not yet been developed (such as agriculture, business education, health, home economics, and vocational education) were required to pass the CCI.

Portfolio Requirements

For each portfolio, teachers must complete several entries that are integrated around one or two units of instruction. These entries include a description of their teaching context, a set of lesson plans, two videotapes of instruction during the unit(s), samples of student work, and written reflections on their planning, instruction, and assessment of student progress. The portfolio requirements are highly structured and second-year teachers are given detailed instructions, in the form of portfolio handbooks, on how to meet them. Each completed portfolio reveals information about the logic and coherence of the teacher's curriculum, the appropriateness of their instructional decisions for students, the range of pedagogical strategies they use effectively, the quality of their assignments, their skill in assessing student learning, and their ability to reflect on their own teaching and make changes based on evidence of student learning (Wilson, Darling-Hammond, & Berry, 2001).

Connecticut's approach to assessing teachers' portfolios is characterized as integrative and dialogic (Moss, 1998). Each portfolio is scored independently by at least two trained assessors who teach in the same content area as the candidate they are evaluating. At first, assessors use a discipline-specific evaluation framework to examine each of the portfolio entries and record evidence that is relevant to the categories. This framework represents the interaction in actual teaching situations among the standards for a given portfolio. In mathematics, for example, the framework includes mathematical tasks, mathematical discourse, learning environment, analysis of learning, and analysis of teaching. After examining the portfolio entries, the assessors then summarize evidence that is relevant to a set of guiding questions. In mathematics, the guiding questions include: How appropriate are the mathematical tasks for the instructional goals and objectives? How does the teacher promote student discourse in the classroom? How does the teacher assess student learning? How does the teacher learn from the experience?

To answer the guiding questions, assessors must compare and integrate evidence from multiple parts of the portfolio, which includes integration across different portfolio entries and types of portfolio data. After summarizing the evidence and answering each of the guiding questions, the assessors then use a scoring rubric as they determine the teacher's overall level of performance. On average, it takes 4-5 hours to score a portfolio.

Portfolios are scored on a 0-to-4 scale; there are three passing levels - advanced (level 4), proficient (level 3), and basic (level 2) -- and two non-passing levels – below basic (level 1) and incomplete (level 0). Those candidates who receive passing scores on their portfolios are eligible to earn a provisional license (provided they meet other requirements). When assessors assign a score of 1 or 0 to a portfolio or when they cannot agree on a score, it is automatically rescored by other assessors and confirmed by a chief reader.

Those candidates who earn non-passing scores have the opportunity to go through the portfolio process again during their third year of teaching. If their performance on the portfolio remains

unsatisfactory, they are ineligible for provisional licensure and are not able to continue teaching in Connecticut.

Assessor Training

Each year in the spring, first-year assessors attend two days of training. In the summer, new and experienced assessors spend 10 to 12 days benchmarking and scoring portfolios. The initial spring training addresses the teaching standards, portfolio requirements, and evaluation framework for the particular subject area in which the assessors teach. The assessors also practice collecting evidence from sample lesson plans, videotaped lessons, student performances, and written reflections. During the summer session, new and experienced assessors review sample portfolios, participate in proficiency scoring, and then spend several days scoring portfolios. According to Willett, "It's really valuable to train both the first-year assessors and the experienced assessors all together. When we did the actual scoring of a portfolio together, it was so imperative that the first-year assessors heard the discussion that the experienced assessors were having."

For many assessors, the experience of scoring portfolios has significantly influenced their approach to mentoring as well as their own instructional practices. A senior advisor in Bristol, Pam Ottley[3], who worked with five first-year elementary teachers, stated that she wanted them to

> start looking at kids because you have to pinpoint two kids for literacy and for math. "Who would be good students to use? How are you going to show your modifications?" . . . (T)o get them to reflect, to really start reflecting . . . (and) to provide evidence of student learning; they've got to show that it has occurred.

An elementary principal in New Britain, Donna Gordon, who served as a portfolio scorer for the state, worked closely with second-year teachers at her school and throughout the district as they went through the portfolio process. For their portfolios, she often reminded second-year teachers

> to think about two children who you want to know more about. Maybe you have a question about how they're going about their learning; they're a mystery to you. They're not maybe at the same level as somebody else in the classroom where you can see growth happening or the changes happening that you want – then it's useful information . . . and through that, some of it is, "What do I need to do teaching-wise, strategy-wise, to support their success?" And it gives it a different focus.

Gordon added, "I really view that whole two-year process as setting a precedent and a mindset for how they need to look at instruction and their teaching and children in general."

The Challenges to Districts Posed By Changes in State Licensure Policy

With the implementation of the BEST portfolios for use in licensure, CSDE staff and state policymakers altered the nature of pressure and support emanating from state policy in order to

[3] Pseudonyms are used for all senior advisors, peer advisors, mentors, beginning teachers, and principals.

promote a new conception of teaching among the state's educators. According to this conception, effective teaching involves:

- integrating content knowledge, knowledge of students, and knowledge of context in making instructional decisions;
- analyzing student learning; and
- reflecting on and modifying practice.

By requiring teachers to go through the portfolio process in their second year, the state recognized that it can take teachers up to a year or longer to acquire these abilities associated with effective teaching.

At the same time, the implementation of the BEST portfolios for use in making licensure decisions posed a series of challenges for school districts with regard to induction. While continuing to help first-year teachers with issues related to orientation, management, and instruction, now districts also needed to 1) provide support to second-year teachers as they went through the portfolio process and 2) ensure that mentors, principals, and others were familiar with the portfolio requirements. To help urban districts respond to these challenges, the state made Goals 2000 funds available in the form of $50,000 grants for mentoring and induction. The different decisions that district officials made with regard to how to spend these funds reflected differences in their beliefs about induction and new teacher development and in their interpretations of state policy. Further, these decisions had important effects on the design and implementation of induction policy and on the nature of the support experienced by beginning teachers. The next two chapters describe induction policy and assistance for new teachers in two Connecticut districts, Bristol and New Britain.

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Chapter III – Bristol's Induction Program

The ninth-largest city in Connecticut, Bristol has long been known for its clock making, spring making, and ballbearing industries, and more recently it has achieved prominence as the home to ESPN. The Bristol School District is an urban district that served 8,868 students in 2000-01, of whom 24.4% were eligible for free- or reduced lunch. In that year, the district had 10 elementary schools, three middle schools, and two high schools.

As superintendent in Bristol from 1997-98 through 2001-02, Ann Clark placed a high priority on teacher quality. The district established high standards for earning tenure and began offering a range of support to beginning teachers through its New Teacher Academy. These supports include a senior advisor, a peer advisor, a district orientation, school orientations, professional development activities, and action plans for new teachers in need of support.

Under Clark's leadership, the district and the Bristol Federation of Teachers began to work intensively with experienced teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory. Those veterans whose performance improves are eligible to continue teaching in Bristol while those who fail to improve are no longer allowed to teach in the district. Between 1997-98 and 2000-2001, more than 30 experienced teachers were forced to stop teaching in the district.

Policy Related to Mentoring and New Teacher Induction

In 1997-98, Clark; the assistant superintendent, Mike Wasta; other district officials; the president of the Bristol Federation of Teachers, Art Costa; and other teachers' union officials agreed to increase the standards for awarding tenure to teachers in Bristol. In Clark's words,

> When I became superintendent in 1997, I insisted that we would hire people with potential for excellence, we would support them, and if they were not excellent, we would not give them tenure . . . I'm very serious about that because no matter what instructional strategies you're using, or how much technological support you give to a teacher, or how small a class size is, unless the teacher is an excellent teacher, you won't get excellent instruction. It is that simple.

In response to the implementation of portfolios by CSDE, Clark, Wasta, and other district officials constructed a new understanding of induction as involving content-specific instructional assistance and elected to use most of Bristol's Goals 2000 grant to fund 10 senior advisor positions in 2000-01 (at a cost of $3,000 each). According to Wasta, "(t)he overall goal is to assist new teachers to become as good as they can be. This means helping them bring knowledge of subject matter together with knowledge of teaching in ways that promote learning for all students."

By 2000-01, induction in the district was widely viewed as holding new teachers to high standards while providing them with support related to classroom management, instruction, and the portfolio requirements over a two-year period. This conception of induction was not only shared by the superintendent and other central office administrators, but also by union officials and many principals and mentors (senior advisors) in Bristol. This meant the notion of induction

as subject-specific instructional assistance was being carried into schools by a number of different actors. The district facilitator in Bristol, Denise Carabetta, noted that the different forms of support provided to new teachers in the district were designed to address management issues as well as instructional issues:

> There are teachers who need assistance with the basic classroom management techniques because things aren't under control. There are other teachers who are ready to learn more sophisticated instructional strategies – they have the classroom under control, but maybe their lesson design isn't quite what it needs to be. Or they're not reflecting well enough on what they designed versus what happened and how it affected student learning.

In 2000-01, Bristol's induction program offered several forms of support to new teachers including a senior advisor, a peer advisor, a district orientation, school orientations, and professional development activities. Each senior advisor worked with a group of three to five new teachers over a two-year period. Each new teacher was also matched with a peer advisor at their school who taught the same subject matter or grade level. The role of the peer advisor was to orient beginning teachers to the school context, share curriculum ideas, and provide moral support. The interactions between novices and peer advisors were confidential. In contrast, the senior advisor's role was to work with beginning teachers over two years on classroom management and instructional issues, and to provide assistance as they went through the portfolio process in their second year. Senior advisors were expected to observe each of their advisees twice in the fall and meet with them one-on-one after each observation, and to meet with them as a group biweekly. They were also expected to maintain regular communication with their advisees' peer advisors and they could be asked to share information with administrators.

Mentor Selection and Assignment. A committee of five teachers and three administrators selects teachers to serve as senior advisors in Bristol. Candidates must complete an application form and provide evidence of expertise in teaching (through principal evaluations) and the ability to provide collegial support to other adults (by having previously served as a BEST mentor for first-year teachers and/or as a cooperating teacher for student teachers). The committee meets each year in the spring to review applications, interview candidates, and select individuals to serve as senior advisors. Because senior advisors are paid $3,000 each by the district, the committee receives more applications each year than the number of available positions. In addition to examining candidates' instructional expertise and ability to work with others, the committee also considers whether they are working at schools serving high percentages of first- and second-year teachers and whether they have experience scoring BEST portfolios.

The committee is also responsible for assigning senior advisors to beginning teachers. Senior advisors teach at the same schooling level as their advisees, but not necessarily the same grade level or content area. For example, Terry Miller, a high school social studies teacher served as senior advisor in 2000-01 for a social studies teacher, two mathematics teachers, a science teacher, and a Spanish teacher. At the high school and middle school levels, most senior advisors teach at the same schools as each of their advisees. At the elementary level, senior advisors typically have advisees who work at different schools. For example, Pam Ottley, a 1st-

grade teacher, served as senior advisor for five first-year teachers who taught in grades K-2 at schools other than her own.

Principals in Bristol select teachers in their schools to serve as peer advisors and match them with beginning teachers in the same content area or at the same grade level. Peer advisors are assigned to new teachers as soon as they are hired. A high school principal in the district, Cal Larrabee, commented,

> I usually talk to someone to ask if they will work with the new teacher over a period of a few years so that all of those little questions about procedures and deadlines can be answered and they don't have to feel intimidated. New teachers are matched with peer advisors who teach in the same content area. And usually proximity is an important consideration.

Mentor Training. Like BEST mentors in other districts, senior advisors in Bristol must participate in 24 hours of BEST support teacher training. In addition, Bristol has provided opportunities for them to attend mentor update sessions. As a result, most senior advisors in the district are sufficiently knowledgeable about the portfolio requirements to assist second-year teachers as they prepare units for their portfolios, videotape classroom instruction, analyze student work, and reflect on their practice.

Several senior advisors and peer advisors in Bristol have scored portfolios for the state and serve as resources to their advisees and other second-year teachers as they go through the portfolio process. One senior advisor, Kendra Ford, who has served as a BEST seminar leader stated that scoring portfolios

> was really an outstanding opportunity to learn not only what the state is looking for, which was my first reason for trying to become part of this – I wanted to know, if I was going to be mentoring someone, what the state was going to require in the way of portfolios . . . it also helped me look at my teaching differently and, as a result, become a better teacher. We spent a lot of time on what kinds of things represented good teaching in our discipline. We spent a lot of time talking about what all of that looked like in a good classroom.

Peer advisors participate in six hours of training that addresses the perspectives and needs of beginning teachers and clarifies the various aspects of their role. According to one peer advisor, participants discussed "how we felt when were starting, and problems we had. Most people who are doing this have been around for many years. They were saying that money is an issue for these young teachers. They're not on the top step" of the salary scale. She added that they discussed the need to tell beginning teachers to make time for themselves. "We've got to tell them, 'You've got to make time for yourself personally, too. Don't just keep working.' I've seen new teachers who will take their kids to lunch and return to their rooms to work."

Mentors' Work Conditions. Senior advisors receive $3,000 a year for their work with beginning teachers, teach full time, and are granted two full days of release time to conduct observations of their advisees. Peer advisors do not receive stipends nor release time.

Other Induction Activities. Bristol provides a one-day orientation to the district for new teachers. During the orientation, the superintendent and other central office administrators are introduced, and the teachers receive an overview of district policy related to teacher evaluation, special education, curriculum, professional development, and new teacher induction. There is also a presentation by the Bristol Federation of Teachers on teachers' contractual responsibilities.

Each school in the district is required to provide a building orientation. At these orientations, new teachers receive an overview of curriculum, instruction, and teacher evaluation in the school. In addition, they are introduced to each other, their peer advisors, the secretaries, and the custodians; the teacher handbook is reviewed; and they have a tour of the building.

Courses are available for beginning teachers through the New Teacher Academy that address classroom management, parent involvement, literacy instruction for grades K-5, differentiated instruction, student motivation, preparing secondary students for the Connecticut Academic Performance Test[4] (CAPT), and working with students with special needs. These courses are free and optional, and each course is offered on multiple occasions during the school year.

Each year, Bristol arranges for teachers-in-residence from CSDE to provide workshops on the BEST portfolio for second-year teachers and senior advisors. In January 2001, separate workshops were held for elementary teachers and secondary teachers. One second-year elementary teacher felt the workshop was helpful because the TIR clarified the expectations for the portfolio: "He basically went through the portfolio handbook and said, 'This is what it tells you to do. This is what they're expecting.' And he knew literacy and math, he was knowledgeable about the subjects."

New Teacher Evaluation. Wasta described the recent history of new teacher evaluation practices in Bristol. When the standards for earning tenure were raised in 1997-98, principals needed "to understand that there was a dramatic shift" in the central administration's view on evaluation:

> Previous central administrations made it very clear that they wanted teachers renewed. Having worked in this district on that end for many years, I knew that in previous administrations if I came forward and I said, "I think I have a teacher here that's not cutting it and perhaps we should think about non-renewal," I was treated as if I had done something wrong, and I was grilled and worked over pretty good. The message was clear to all the building administrators that you just don't do this. So we had to undo that message and that took awhile . . . Once we got the administrators on board, we changed the instrument by which we evaluated new teachers.

Non-tenured teachers in Bristol are observed three times by mid-December, by their principal or another building administrator.[5] At the elementary and middle schools, they are observed by

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[4] The Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) is administered to 10th-graders and measures their knowledge and skills in mathematics, science, reading across the disciplines, and writing across the disciplines.

[5] By state law, districts in Connecticut must make the decision whether to award tenure at the end of the teacher's fourth year of teaching in public schools.

their principals while high school teachers are observed by principals or assistant principals. In each case, the administrator conducting the observation is expected to have teaching experience in the same subject area as that taught by the teacher being evaluated. In conducting observations, administrators use the district's Professional Performance Instrument (PPI), which is similar to the Connecticut Competency Instrument. Prior to each observation, the teacher fills out a form describing the classroom context, their lesson plan and its place in a larger unit of instruction, and the instructional materials and assessment strategies used in the lesson or unit.

During the observations, administrators use the PPI to rate teachers in several categories including 1) the teaching and learning process (e.g., planning, implementation, and assessment), 2) classroom management, 3) classroom climate, and 4) professional/personal attributes. For each category, the administrator rates the teacher as distinguished, proficient, basic, or unsatisfactory. Within five days of the observations, administrators meet with teachers to discuss the evaluations.

A central office administrator is assigned as a back-up evaluator for each new teacher in the district. If a school administrator has concerns about a beginning teacher, they can contact the appropriate central office staff member for assistance. These central office administrators conduct classroom observations, help devise action plans to address areas of weakness, and help building administrators decide whether to recommend new teachers for contract renewal.

Teacher Salaries. Teacher salaries in Bristol are highly competitive among districts in west-central Connecticut, especially those serving comparable demographics. In 2000-01, the first step on the salary scale for teachers with a bachelor's degree was $30,099; the fifth step was $39,989; and the 10th step was $52,094. For teachers with a master's degree, the first step was $33,666; the fifth step was $44,436; and the 10th step was $57,900. Teacher salaries in the district were higher than 1) those in most other districts located in close geographic proximity to Bristol as well as 2) those in most other ERG H districts.

Teacher Retention. In combination with district induction policies, the high salaries in Bristol appear to have positively influenced new teacher retention. Of those who started teaching in 1998-99 or 1999-2000 in ERG H districts in Connecticut, 87.3% of those who started in Bristol remained in the district through at least their third year of teaching. In contrast, only 75.8% of those who started teaching in other ERG H districts in 1998-99 or 1999-2000 remained in their district of origin through their third year of teaching. Further, of those who started teaching in 1998-99, 1999-2000, or 2000-01 in ERG H districts, 84.7% of those who started in Bristol were still teaching in the district in 2001-02. In contrast, only 76.4% of those who started teaching in other ERG H districts in 1998-99, 1999-2000, or 2000-01 continued to teach in their district of origin in 2001-02.

Intervention with Experienced Teachers. Bristol's evaluation system for tenured teachers has three phases. In the first phase, school administrators use the PPI to conduct formal observations. If a teacher in phase one needs significant improvement in a number of areas, they spend a second year in this phase. If during the second year, they fail to demonstrate improvement, the building administrator contacts one of the instructional supervisors in the district, Carabetta (PreK-5) or Steve Anderson (grades 6-12). The instructional supervisor goes

to observe the teacher and meet with them, and then makes recommendations for how they might improve their practice.

At this point, if the tenured teacher fails to upgrade their instructional practice, they are directed to attend a meeting with Clark, Wasta, Carabetta or Anderson (depending on the teacher's level), the district's personnel director, their building administrator, and union representatives (if they choose to have them attend). At the meeting, the building administrator and either Carabetta or Anderson discuss their concerns about the teacher's practices. At that meeting, a formal, written action plan is created and the teacher is given three to six months to improve their teaching.

In most cases, after three to six months, teachers demonstrate sufficient improvement and they are invited to continue teaching in Bristol. In some cases, though, they make little progress and the district initiates the process of termination. In such instances, teachers are given the option of resigning, in which case they are eligible to teach in other Connecticut districts, or being fired, in which case they cannot be hired by other districts in the state. Through this process, initiated in September 1997, over thirty veteran teachers in Bristol had been dismissed as of spring, 2001.

Art Costa, the president of the Bristol Federation of Teachers, worked closely with Clark and Wasta to develop the induction and intervention programs in Bristol. In Costa's words,

> We have a tradition now of using action plans with experienced teachers who are struggling. Basically, management perceives that a teacher is not functioning up to expectations. The teacher is asked to attend a meeting with the superintendent and other district officials. The teacher has the option of bringing union representation or not. The teacher comes in, listens to what management has to say, and then management proposes a plan, which is a list of things that they're looking for . . . In the vast majority of cases, the individual looks at the plan, says "Yes, I can do this." There is a period of time – six months to a year – where they work on those weaknesses and things are fine . . . There have been a few instances where, for whatever reason, management never felt that the employee made the gains that were necessary. Those teachers were asked to resign.

A high school principal, Eldon Lanier, commented on the intervention process with veteran teachers:

> I'm working right now with a couple of teachers who are in trouble as veteran faculty members. In one case, we've met several times with the superintendent; there has been support from the central office, instructional personnel. I've been involved in working with the instructional support as well as working with the teacher. It's been very much a team effort. In this case, it's been decided that the teacher will eventually leave the profession. In another case, we were able to salvage the teacher. We don't have an all-star, but we have someone now who is, at least, acceptable. In a third case, I actually was able to work with the superintendent and others with a teacher who turned into an all-star. It was someone who had one foot out the door. This person is now taking a leadership position on this faculty.

Induction Program Evaluation. Central office administrators in Bristol have used both focus groups and surveys to get feedback from teachers about their induction program. Teacher feedback has been used in developing components of the program, evaluating their effectiveness, and making changes. For example, Bristol evaluated the peer advisor program at the end of the 1999-2000 school year by surveying first-year teachers, peer advisors, and principals. According to Wasta, there were "rave reviews about how helpful it was. It was confirmed that one of the keys was that confidential, non-threatening relationship. That was very good. However, we were still struggling to get mentors" and the district was concerned about providing support to novices over a two-year period. "When we looked at our analysis of the New Teacher Academy, what needed to be added to it, two things became apparent. We wanted to keep the peer advisor component " and add the senior advisor component.

Induction Support for First-Year Teachers

Most first-year teachers in Bristol have frequent, substantive conversations with their senior advisors and/or peer advisors in which they acquire curricular knowledge, plan instruction, and reflect on their practice. In 2000-01, senior advisors in the district observed each of their advisees on at least two occasions. Senior advisor Pam Ottley, who taught 1st grade, worked with five first-year teachers. She stated that in her observations, "I was looking just to make sure that the classroom was being managed so that student learning could take place, and that the (district) curriculum was being used." One of her advisees, Laura Ledwick, taught 1st grade at another school in Bristol and struggled early in the year to implement the district's language arts curriculum, receiving little support from colleagues at her school. In Ottley's words,

> She was having a difficult time getting it going. She does have a 1st grade and she needs to teach these children reading and she needs to be following them. She just didn't really know how to set it up, or where to start. She wasn't given any guidance. So I offered my assistance and we're meeting regularly. We're doing one small part at a time until we finally get her into the whole program.

Ottley met weekly with Ledwick for 90 minutes after school to help her establish guided reading groups, implement Running Records and Diagnostic Reading Assessments (DRAs), and create appropriate learning-based centers for her students. According to Ledwick, "I knew about the DRAs and guided reading, but she helped me get my guided reading groups set up and running." In one meeting, they reflected on Ledwick's efforts to implement guided reading.

> Ottley: How did things go with your reading groups this week?
> Ledwick: I'd say three groups are doing well. With two groups, I spend a lot of time having them make predictions about what will happen next and talking about experiences they've had that are similar to what happens in the story. These are my two strongest groups. My lowest group also functions OK during guided reading with me. I think that's because they read a lot with the Title I teacher – they're used to it. It's my third group – they're more disruptive when they're with me. We get less done.
> Ottley: What did you do with them this week?

Ledwick: We read a book from Level 12 on cars and trucks. Most of the kids in this group are boys – I thought it would engage them.
Ottley: What happened?
Ledwick: Well, maybe the level was too high or maybe they're not used to working in groups like this. I had a hard time talking with them about their own experiences – they all wanted to talk at once.
Ottley: That's a good sign; it sounds like they were interested in the topic. And you may need to establish clear expectations for their behavior when they're sharing.
Ledwick: And then only one child was able to read the text. I wanted to engage them with the book, but I guess they weren't ready for Level 12.
Ottley: That's all right. It sounds like they're still getting used to being in a reading group and you're finding out what level of text is appropriate for them. You may want to read one-on-one with some of them to better understand what strategies they already know, where they could use some work, and to learn more about their interests.

Ottley had less contact with another one of her advisees, Don Hartson, a 2nd-grade teacher who was also at a different school from her. Hartson worked closely with his peer advisor, Sally Carter, and another 2nd-grade colleague, Marilyn Aaronson, at his school to acquire curricular knowledge and plan instruction. At the beginning of the school year, Hartson felt a little uncertain because teaching 2nd-grade was new to him and he had "a whole year's worth of material to teach. So they sat down with me and they gave me basically the scope and the sequence." Carter and Aaronson spoke with him about the topics they typically covered each month in mathematics and language arts, and how they alternated between social studies and science units throughout the year. As the year went along, Hartson continued talking with his grade-level colleagues about ideas for lessons and appropriate instructional strategies and materials. In his words, "We have a time to meet that is scheduled once a week. We really sit down and talk like every two weeks. We're always in informal communication every day with things."

Because Hartson met biweekly to plan instruction with Carter, and Aaronson, Ottley met with him less often than with some of her other advisees. Further, Hartson had meaningful conversations with his principal, Dwight Bellamy, about instructional issues. Bellamy devoted copious amounts of time to writing up classroom observations and discussing them with his teachers. While he followed the district's evaluation instrument, modeled after the Connecticut Competency Instrument (CCI), he was also knowledgeable about the new state teaching standards and portfolio requirements. In his words,

> (I)t is important to focus on classroom management, but I also feel new teachers should learn to integrate their subject matter knowledge with instructional methodology and the identified competencies and the nuts and bolts of how to teach.

After each of his observations of Hartson, Bellamy reported that "we spent a lot of time talking about my observations. I tried to make them as objective as possible, offering suggestions where appropriate."

A few first-year teachers in Bristol, including Ledwick, addressed instructional issues primarily or solely with their senior advisors. Sometimes this occurred when the new teacher had the same teaching assignment as their senior advisor and felt little need to raise questions with others about curriculum or student learning. In other cases, such as that of Ledwick, first-year teachers worked in schools where meaningful collaboration rarely took place. In such situations, novices had little opportunity to address instructional issues with grade-level or subject-area colleagues, including their peer advisors. In contrast, most first-year teachers in Bristol, including Hartson and several others described below, discussed curriculum and pedagogy and reflected on their teaching with senior advisors as well as peer advisors and other colleagues.

The induction experience of a new 3rd-grade teacher, Jill Metcalf, was similar to that of Hartson. Metcalf was assigned to a senior advisor, Walter Montross, who taught 4th-grade at her school and who had served as her cooperating teacher during the previous school year. Competent and self-assured, Metcalf had few questions for Montross about her language arts or mathematics curriculum or managing students' behavior. Throughout the year, though, she met monthly with her peer advisor, Bonnie Stinson, and her other 3rd-grade colleague, Vickie Johnson. During these grade-team meetings, Metcalf often talked with them about strategies for instruction and assessment. In addition, they spoke informally on a daily basis. In Metcalf's words, "We confer a lot about the different techniques that we use for teaching writing and the different lessons that we use every day . . . We share a lot of assessments and tools that help us in teaching lessons."

Third-graders in Bristol were given writing prompts once a month in which they wrote for 45 minutes in response to a question. In one meeting with Stinson and Johnson early in the year, Metcalf discussed her concerns about scoring writing prompts. She asked them, "How can you tell what is a '2', what is a '3'? And how do you go about making that '3' into a '4'?" The three of them examined some prompts together, with Stinson and Johnson providing their rationales for the scores they assigned. Then Metcalf's colleagues shared some strategies and helped her plan instruction to further improve students' writing, including the use of pre-testing as a strategy to learn about students' level of understanding of various topics.

Metcalf also talked with her principal, Alice Kerry, about instructional issues on a consistent basis. Kerry observed her three times and prior to each observation, Metcalf

> wrote what the lesson was going to be about, what my objectives were, who I was going to reach, who I was going to modify for, what I expected to get out of it. And then she would come in, do the observation, and then she wrote up a formal observation form and touched upon all the positives and all the negatives. And then afterwards, we talked about how it went and signed it.

From Kerry's perspective, engaging in reflective inquiry was central to teacher development. In her words, "(o)ne of my goals this year has been to generate discussions with my staff around" the state's new teaching standards. "In my work with young teachers, it's one of the things I push

– force yourself to be a reflective educator." She added that she felt the portfolio process "is a very important, reflective process." Metcalf added that Kerry had made time to talk with teachers on literacy issues. She often set up opportunities to talk about "some successes and concerns and what strategies we've been using. The conversations involved myself, the principal, and the literacy teacher."

Metcalf's senior advisor, Montross, observed her twice in the fall and met with her after both observations, but he did not address students' abilities or understandings in his interactions with her. Instead, Montross focused on the design of Metcalf's lessons, the extent to which she followed her instructional plans, and her ability to manage the classroom. This approach to mentoring reflected the view of induction underlying the CCI. In Montross' words, "Classroom management is a big emphasis . . . you can tell when you need to spend time" with the new teachers. "You can tell when they're pretty much, they're able to fly on their own."

Montross' limited ability to address instructional issues with Metcalf and his other advisees points to an important issue. Despite changes in state and district policy, some veteran teachers in Connecticut continue to view effective teaching as classroom management. In the case of Montross, although he had been introduced to the state's new teaching standards and portfolio requirements through support teacher training, he focused primarily on the learning environments in his advisees' classrooms and their ability to manage student behavior.

A third senior advisor, Kendra Ford, taught biology and worked with four first-year teachers at her high school. Ford, who served as a portfolio scorer and BEST seminar leader for the state, discussed curricular and instructional issues frequently with one of her advisees, Linda Dawson, who also taught biology. According to Ford,

> We told our first-year teachers, "OK, you hear the word 'inquiry' all the time in your undergraduate work, what does that mean? How do we do that? How can you take this body of information that kids need to know at the end of this unit and turn it into a unit that involves asking questions, collecting data? Something that kids are really interested in, and can find answers to, so that you're not the one providing the answers necessarily for them."

For her part, Dawson reported that she and Ford worked closely together in developing inquiry-oriented lessons and units: "We try to be inquiry-based and we would like our whole curriculum to be a discovery process where students do a lot of the thinking, and a lot of the figuring out."

At one meeting, Ford helped Dawson to plan a unit on organelles that would be inquiry-based.

> Dawson: I want to teach my students about the structure and function of a cell, but I'd like it to be inquiry-based. I don't want to simply tell them what each organelle does.
> Ford: I have an idea for you. In the past, a colleague and I would teach the unit on cell function by having them make different organelles out of different types of food. We assigned each student an organelle and they had to go do research on their organelle. And then they made presentations to the class.

> Dawson: So in the presentations, they teach the other students about the structure and function of their organelle?
> Ford: Yes.
> Dawson: That sounds like a good idea – I find my students are usually engaged when their peers are at the front of the class.
> Ford: That's been my experience as well. And they're graded on how well they explain the purpose of their organelle and whether the food item they chose resembles it.

Ford observed Dawson and each of her other advisees twice and met with them following the observations. After being observed by Ford for the first time in November, Dawson stated that she

> asked me things like, "How do you think it went? Was there anything that you didn't like about it?" It was strictly, from her point of view, just having me reflect on it. She prompted me to reflect on my own teaching. She didn't say, "I don't like this," or "You should have done this" — it was nothing like that. Because she teaches in the same area, she did say, "The next time you teach this unit, you might want to think about using these materials or this approach."

In January, Ford and Dawson met to consider some changes in the sequence of the biology curriculum. Due to the emphasis on the human body on the CAPT science assessment, Ford suggested doing a unit on the human body in February and then using it as a reference point for teaching about different body systems. The two of them also discussed changing the order in which different systems were taught to help students make more connections across topics and promote student understanding.

A fourth senior advisor, Terry Miller, a high school social studies teacher, addressed classroom management and instructional issues with each of his advisees. One advisee, Sam Galvin, was a first-year algebra teacher. In fall 2000, Galvin noted that Miller was "challenging me to make my students think critically." Instead of asking questions with yes-or-no answers, Miller encouraged Galvin to ask students to provide explanations for their answers. Galvin added that in his lesson plans, he had started "to make a little box with key points, key questions that will make them dive deeper into their thinking, deeper into their lesson."

Over the course of the school year, Galvin had less contact with Miller who worked closely in the spring with two second-year teachers at the school as they went through the BEST portfolio process.

Galvin spoke frequently about instructional issues with his peer advisor, Louise Pringle, who also taught algebra. In his words,

> We have a lot of the same beliefs, a lot of the same teaching styles. She's great. She's probably the most phenomenal teacher I've ever seen – bar none. I try to just listen to her, listen to what she says. Try to take in all I can. She's helped me out a lot. She's given me a lot of materials.

For example, when he struggled in teaching his students how to solve linear equations, Pringle suggested different ways of teaching the topic. In Galvin's words, "There are so many ways you can attack a problem. So now I have three different methods to explore with my students – linear combination, substitution, or graphing."

At one point, Galvin had a list of open-ended questions that he wanted to use to prepare his students for the CAPT math assessment. He went to Pringle to see if

> she thought these were the types of questions that were going to be on the CAPT. She threw some off; she said, "These won't work." And she gave me some more. And she helped me basically organize my thoughts, organize my questions, and just showed me the direction I wanted to go in with this. And she also shared some techniques, some strategies on how to attack these questions.

Pringle noted that she and Galvin frequently reflected together on their experiences in Algebra I and Algebra II: "A lot of times, because we're teaching the same classes, I can then say, 'Here's what happened today, what could I have done differently to get my students more engaged?' . . . When I go to the next class, I teach the same lesson, it gets better." Galvin confirmed that he reflected with Pringle on a regular basis. For example, when he struggled to teach a unit on exponential functions, she suggested using more hands-on activities so that they could collect their own data and not rely on him as much.

Pringle's approach to working with Galvin reflected the notion of induction embedded in the portfolios, which she had encountered during mentor update training and when she went through the portfolio process herself two years earlier. Pringle felt this process

> was a very positive experience. I thought it helped me get very organized with myself. I feel it really made me look at what I'm doing and reflect a lot on my teaching . . . having gone through it, I feel prepared to address links between content and pedagogy with teachers entering the classroom.

Galvin was observed three times by his assistant principal, Kellen Cantor. Prior to each observation, Galvin talked with Cantor about his lesson plans, his goals for student learning, and the relationship between the lesson to be observed and the rest of the instructional unit. After each observation, we had "a post-conference meeting where we discussed what went wrong, what went right, what I'd change, what I could do differently." These discussions often addressed academic content because Cantor had experience teaching algebra.

Overall, first-year teachers in Bristol had extensive opportunities to address instructional issues. Ledwick and Dawson acquired curricular knowledge, planned instruction, and reflected on practice with their senior advisors while Hartson, Metcalf, and Galvin worked closely with their peer advisors. The high quality of the assistance experienced by new teachers in Bristol seemed related to the district's policy of assigning each of them a senior advisor or peer advisor who taught in the same content area and grade level.

Positive Effects Related to Mentor Compensation

In two cases, those of Ledwick and Dawson, compensation and release time for senior advisors appeared to have a direct effect on the quality of induction support they provided. But mentor compensation also seemed to have important indirect effects on induction practices; in particular, it created incentives for accomplished teachers – many of whom were peer advisors - to learn about the portfolio requirements in order to apply for senior advisor positions. This, in turn, often affected peer advisors' mentoring practices. Principal leadership also seemed to play a focal role in new teachers' experiences; in most cases, first-year teachers addressed content-specific pedagogy with school leaders.

Building Relationships and Practice: Induction Support for Second-Year Teachers

Many second-year teachers in Bristol addressed curricular and instructional issues and the BEST portfolio requirements with senior advisors or peer advisors. In particular, many discussed the units they were planning for their portfolios, assessments of student work, and reflections on their practice. One second-year teacher, Brenda Sellars, taught 3rd grade and was new to the district in 2000-01. She worked at a different school than her senior advisor, Walter Montross. Sellars established a strong professional relationship with her peer advisor, Paula Gottlieb, who also taught 3rd grade at her school. They frequently discussed curricular issues, which for Sellars was very helpful "especially when you don't have a feel for the curriculum and you don't know where you're going to wind up in June, or where you need to be really."

Sellars also talked with Gottlieb about how to use the results of student assessments to improve her teaching. For example, in Sellars' words,

> the district has us do a monthly writing sample. Every month, when the students are done, I read the samples and score them according to the rubric that was given to me. Then I give them to Paula, who has been trained, and have her score them and give them back to me. And then we'll talk about strategies or why this particular sample is weak and what I can do in my classroom to make it stronger.

Gottlieb was trained to score BEST portfolios for the state. In the spring of 2001, she helped Sellars plan the literacy and numeracy units for her portfolio, and reviewed a draft of her portfolio and gave her feedback on it. In one meeting, they reflected on the mathematics unit Sellars had taught for the portfolio.

> Gottlieb: I watched your videos. There is definitely evidence of student discourse in the group discussion; that's important. When you had the children identify shapes and classify them, did you modify instruction for either of your target students?
> Sellars: For one student - he had difficulty with shapes and creating categories – I gave him fewer attribute blocks than the others. The point was to see if he was able to identify a few basic two-dimensional shapes – triangle, square, circle – that were of different sizes. I didn't make any modifications for the other student.

> Gottlieb: And your reflections - for the most part, they were thorough and very thoughtful. You might want to elaborate, though, on whether you would do anything differently or seek professional development in geometry or a related area.
> Sellars: I guess, next time, I wouldn't teach them about so many three-dimensional objects. Many children learned that rotating a triangle creates a cone or rotating a rectangle creates a cylinder, but I tried to cover too much, and some of them had a hard time.

In part because of her strong relationship with Garvin, Sellars did not seek out her senior advisor, Montross, for assistance with instructional issues very often.

Sellars' principal, Rachel Vance, was strongly committed to teacher induction and knowledgeable about the portfolios. She arranged for grade teams to meet once a week during common periods. As part of the teacher evaluation process, she asked teachers to bring samples of student work to post-conferences. In her words,

> Student achievement is a top priority. Kids have to be learning at their correct level of difficulty. By looking closely at student work, teachers can see whether they're meeting their objectives and what changes they might need to make to engage certain students."

In February, Vance arranged for Gottlieb to meet with all five second-year teachers at the school to go over the portfolio requirements. From that point on, many of them used Gottlieb as a resource as they went through the portfolio process.

Another second-year teacher at the same school, 2nd-grade teacher Kendra Dollis, addressed instructional issues with a number of colleagues including the district mathematics coordinator, Terry Bingham, and Paula Gottlieb. Bingham visited Dollis' classroom monthly to conduct demonstration lessons on patterning and to observe her teaching. According to Dollis, "Sometimes when she's here, she will stand in front of the room and model an entire lesson for about 30 to 45 minutes. Other times, she watches me teach and then we discuss it afterwards." Bingham shared strategies with Dollis for using manipulatives to gain insight into children's understandings about subtraction.

Dollis talked with Gottlieb about the numeracy unit she taught for her portfolio, which was on shapes. Gottlieb helped her plan the sequence of lessons, select an appropriate assessment activity, and modify instruction to meet the needs of individual students. According to Dollis,

> In my first lesson with them, we named different attributes of shapes – size, shape, and color – and how you word them. Then we explored each of these attributes. By the end, they had to take an attribute block and find another block that was different from the first block in at least two ways (size, shape, or color). For one of our review lessons, we talked about attributes of people – how you can describe people. That helped them get in the frame of mind of describing things.

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The experiences of Sellars and Dollis signify the important role that principal leadership can play in induction. Vance had participated in mentor update training, and the notion of induction as subject-specific instructional assistance shaped her direct interactions with second-year teachers as well as her efforts to facilitate their work on the portfolios. By analyzing student work during post-conferences, Vance indicated to her teachers that teacher evaluation was not a mere formality, but instead an opportunity for reflection and growth. Further, by having Gottlieb meet with the five second-year teachers at the school as they began the portfolio process, Vance signaled to them that she was willing to share instructional leadership responsibilities and that Gottlieb could be viewed as a valued resource as they went through the process.

Andrea Lesko was a second-year teacher who taught 6th-grade language arts at a middle school in Bristol. In 1999-2000, she met regularly with her senior advisor, Jim Rellner, an 8th-grade language arts teacher at her school. In her words,

> We sat down at least every other week. A lot of the things I was concerned about my first year had to do with classroom management. That was a big difference for me. I subbed for a year; before that, I worked in a day-care center with three-year-olds so classroom management was a little different. He is a great writing teacher, and he was very helpful in my efforts to integrate the writing with the reading.

In her first year, Lesko also met once a week with other members of her 6th-grade interdisciplinary team, which featured a mathematics teacher, a science teacher, a social studies teacher, another language arts teacher, and herself. The team primarily discussed individual students and school policies, and sometimes team members collaborated in interdisciplinary units. Of her team members, Lesko felt that Joyce Randolph, the social studies teacher, was the most supportive "because she actually used to have this job. She was very, very helpful with materials and supplies and units."

In her second year, Lesko received support from Rellner, Randolph, and her principal, Brian Tolbert, as she went through the portfolio process. She continued meeting every other week with Rellner as she planned an ecology unit on rainforests and endangered species. According to Lesko, "Jim helped me come up with a good persuasive essay question: 'Does the United States have the right to tell other countries what to do with the rainforest?' We had read all sorts of background on depletion and which countries do what with different resources." Rellner also helped her videotape lessons for the portfolio, analyze students' essays, and reflect on her lessons. Lesko felt that their meetings "were very productive. We sat down several times to talk about the portfolio itself and to just generally talk about how things were going."

The unit on rainforests was interdisciplinary with social studies so Lesko also talked with Randolph as she planned the unit and taught each lesson. Lesko and Randolph discussed ways to present information about resource use in the United States, other Western nations, and developing nations in ways that students would be likely to understand. In addition, Randolph recommended a few short stories of what living conditions were like in the rainforest and some ideas for art projects.

Lesko also addressed instructional issues and received portfolio-related assistance from her principal. In conducting the evaluation process, Tolbert concentrated on Lesko's lesson plans, writing assignments for students, and reflections. In post-conferences, he often talked with her about the range of ability levels and socioeconomic backgrounds in her classes.

In 2000-01, Terry Miller worked closely with Mary Connors who, like him, taught 10th-grade U.S. history. For several weeks, they met during after-school meeting times that had been set aside for professional development to discuss her work for her portfolio.[6] Miller added that he helped Connors think through which lessons to videotape and what to include in the unit. In Miller's words, "For awhile, I was just meeting with her pre-video, trying to get organized, making sure her lessons were going to be OK."

In one meeting, Connors talked with Miller about doing a unit on the Bill of Rights:

> Connors: I'd like to start the unit by having a discussion about the First Amendment. I have some articles from Scholastic Update on freedom of speech that I could have them read. One is about some students in Florida who had an underground newspaper at their school. The paper had some features with racial slurs as well as a picture of someone shooting the principal. And this was after what happened at Columbine. I think it will lead to a lively discussion about free speech.
> Miller: That sounds good. In starting this unit, do you want to bring them to a strong understanding of the purpose of the First Amendment before talking with them about the Bill of Rights? Or do you want to lay a foundation with a general discussion of the Bill of Rights before plunging into the First Amendment?
> Connors: I see what you're getting at, but with my kids it might be good to get their attention and then go back to introduce them to the Bill of Rights. If they're engaged when we do free speech, they may get interested in the other amendments as well.
> Miller: That's quite reasonable – it makes sense to me. And then after the free speech discussion and overview of the Bill of Rights, what would be next?
> Connors: I definitely want to discuss the Second Amendment, the right to bear arms, and the Fourth Amendment, search and seizure.
> Miller: And what assignments are you thinking of for this unit?
> Connors: Last year, I used a list of statements that could be verified or falsified by making reference to the Bill of Rights. The students have to determine whether the statement is true and then find support for their position in the Bill of Rights.

As she worked on her portfolio, Connors reflected frequently with Miller on her teaching. They discussed the extent to which the whole class was engaged in each lesson as well as the performance of the two students on whom she had elected to focus. Connors stated,

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[6] The teachers' contract in Bristol called for teachers to participate in professional development activities once a week for an hour throughout the 2000-01 school year.

> There were two different kinds of students. One was a very good academically gifted student. The other one does well academically, but his biggest difficulty is writing skills. There were several essays during that unit which allowed me to work with him on his writing skills.

During their meetings, Connors and Miller discussed ways to challenge the first student by having her learn about a few additional amendments and consider their relevance for recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions and other current events. They also looked at several writing samples completed by the second student and considered strategies for Connors to use to help him strengthen his writing.

Connors was observed three times by her principal, Cal Larrabee. In post-observation conferences, they discussed connections between her learning objectives and her assessments, and they often examined samples of student writing. Larrabee also promoted teacher learning by devoting one after-school professional development period each month to departmental meetings where teachers could discuss curriculum and pedagogy. In his words,

> Professional development isn't just something that happens when someone from outside the school comes, but it can also occur when subject-matter colleagues meet to plan a unit or a series of lessons. Ultimately, it is more important for departmental colleagues to have opportunities to collaborate because it gives value to the expertise that we have here in the building. And we have a lot of people with a lot of true expertise and sometimes that is made light of when you're always hiring the outside experts.

In spring 2001, when Connors and other second-year teachers were working on their portfolios, Larrabee permitted them to meet with their senior advisors or other colleagues during the after-school professional development periods. Between January and April, Connors and Miller met every other week during these meeting times to discuss her portfolio.

Overall, second-year teachers in Bristol had extensive opportunities to address instructional issues with colleagues as they went through the portfolio process. Sellars, Lesko, and Connors discussed curriculum and pedagogy with their senior advisors or peer advisors while Dollis turned to other colleagues – including Gottlieb, a portfolio scorer - after her peer advisor left the school following her first year of teaching. The high quality of assistance experienced by these teachers appeared related to district policy related to mentor assignment.

In Connors' case, compensation and release time for Miller seemed to directly influence the quality of support he provided. District policy related to mentor assignment and mentors' work conditions also appeared to have an indirect effect on the quality of assistance that Sellars, Dollis, and Lesko experienced. Both Gottlieb and Rellner had applied for senior advisor positions in spring 2000, but neither had been selected. They each planned to apply again in spring 2001 and clearly felt that learning about the portfolio requirements and providing thorough assistance to second-year teachers would bolster their candidacies. As with first-year teachers in Bristol, school leadership also seemed to have a significant impact on second-year

teachers' experiences; all four beginning teachers examined student learning with their principals.

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Chapter IV - New Teacher Induction in New Britain

Work conditions can be very challenging for beginning teachers in New Britain, an urban district that served10,295 students in 2000-01. Of these students, 54.9% were eligible for free or reduced lunch; 67% were Hispanic, African American, or Asian American; and 62% had limited English proficiency. For a variety of reasons, the district has been successful at retaining new teachers and promoting their development. These reasons include strong leadership from the assistant superintendent for instructional services, Vanda O'Reilly, who also serves as the district facilitator; high teacher salaries; and a comprehensive induction program. New Britain's induction program features support from mentors and other colleagues, a district orientation, monthly workshops for first-year teachers, and assistance for second-year teachers as they go through the BEST portfolio process. Through a $50,000 state Goals 2000 grant, the district has provided additional support to beginning teachers related to classroom management, and compensated portfolios scorers who assist second-year teachers in the portfolio process.

One elementary principal, Julian Sanchez, stated,

> The main reason there is a strong commitment to induction in New Britain is Vanda O'Reilly. She meets with beginning teachers and provides workshops for them. She makes sure that they are familiar with the portfolio process. She is the reason the district makes supporting new teachers a priority.

The sections that follow examine the nature of support to first- and second-year teachers in the district, and in particular, support provided to new teachers by mentors, portfolio scorers, and others.

Policy Related to Mentoring and New Teacher Induction

The purpose of mentoring and the other induction activities in New Britain is to simultaneously address classroom management and instructional issues over a two-year period. In response to the implementation of the BEST portfolios, O'Reilly began to emphasize content-specific instructional assistance in induction. At the same time, she continued to emphasize support related to classroom management. O'Reilly maintains that a productive learning environment

> is a challenge in urban schools, particularly when you are white, middle class – and that is still what the vast majority of our teachers are – and you are dealing with a population that is close to 70% minority and come from all kinds of challenging home situations. So it really has to be addressed, because if you can't get that under control, you're not going to do very well with the rest of your work. Having said that, curriculum and instruction are key . . . We provide support to second-year teachers through mentors and district workshops. Many participants have found these workshops to be a powerful form of professional learning as they are working on their portfolios.

Her words were echoed by several mentors and principals in the study. For example, an elementary principal, Donna Gordon, commented:

> We have a very urban population, a very high Hispanic population, and approximately 60% of the children come from impoverished homes. As a result, we have a challenge to meet varying needs – children enter the school lacking experiences and exposure. In addition, education isn't the most important part of some of our children's backgrounds. So that brings many challenges to a predominantly middle-class, white teaching population . . . We also make sure to provide support to teachers beyond that first year because of the portfolio requirements that they have.

Mentors in New Britain are expected to help orient first-year teachers to their school contexts and to provide assistance related to classroom management and instruction. While some second-year teachers work closely with their mentors as they go through the portfolio process, they all have access to portfolio scorers from the district. In 2000-01, these scorers facilitated workshops for separate groups of elementary and secondary second-year teachers, and many worked one-one with second-year teachers to help them plan units for their portfolios, videotape instruction, analyze student work, and reflect on their practice.

Mentor Selection and Assignment. A committee of six teachers and two administrators, including O'Reilly, selects teachers to serve as mentors. The committee includes an elementary teacher, a middle school teacher, a high school teacher, a special education teacher, and a bilingual education teacher. Teachers must complete an application and provide two recommendations including one from their building administrator. The committee meets each year in the spring to select mentors, and the main selection criteria are whether teachers can demonstrate evidence of instructional expertise (based on principal evaluations), and the ability to work with other adults (in roles such as instructional coaches, cooperating teachers, and/or providers of professional development).

District policy in New Britain calls for grade-level and/or content-area matches between mentors and mentees, and principals are responsible for assigning mentors to beginning teachers. In terms of implementation, most mentors teach in the same subject area and/or schooling level as their mentees, most mentors work at the same schools as their mentees, and most mentors work with one new teacher at a time although some are assigned to two mentees at once.

Gordon talked about the importance of the matches between mentors and first- and second-year teachers. At her school, two new 5th-grade teachers were matched with a mentor who taught 4th grade, a second-year 3rd-grade teacher was matched with a mentor who taught 3rd grade, and a second-year 1st-grade teacher was matched with a mentor who taught kindergarten. Gordon noted,

> When you really have that grade-level match, or one grade apart, you're able to get into actual instruction and strategies, and that's really where beginning teachers need a lot of support. When you're near each other in grade level, there's a lot of informal conversation that goes on. There's a lot of "I can go right across the hall quickly or open the door or if we have grade-level time, it lends itself to greater conversations." When you have to make appointments or set

> times, especially at an elementary school where our days are tremendously long and a number of issues arise, it's very difficult. So I think if it can be in the same building and at or near the same grade level, it's tremendous.

A middle school principal, Ed Nagosta, concurred. In his words,

> Obviously, the best case scenario, you want somebody who teaches the same subject area, the same grade level, even the same team, as well as there's a compatibility factor. One of the things I've always told my mentees is that if you're not compatible, if you're uncomfortable with your mentor or the other way around, let me know and we'll switch you. I think the most important factor is that compatibility . . . The mentee is not going to pour their heart out to somebody that they don't like, that they don't trust.

Mentor Training. Like mentors in other districts in Connecticut, those in New Britain participate in 24 hours of state-provided BEST support teacher training. Several mentors in the district have also acquired additional training related to working with new teachers. For example, some have attended update sessions while others have scored BEST portfolios for the state.

One mentor, Benita Sawchuk, noted that the BEST support teacher training was "very good. They'll send me materials on what to look for, what to do with them. There is a lot of guidance." Another mentor, Laura Crenshaw, who had served as a portfolio scorer, felt the scorer training helped her become more reflective in her own teaching, and it enabled her to get new teachers to reflect more. "Now, after a lesson, I no longer just ask them how things went," Crenshaw said. "Instead, I talk with them about individual students and what they learned, and how they would change their lesson plan or assessment in the future."

Mentors' Work Conditions. Mentors in New Britain teach full-time and are not compensated for their work with first-year teachers. While the district office does not grant release time to mentors, some principals arranged for them to work with their mentees during the school day. In 2001-02, mentors who were trained as BEST portfolio scorers were paid $150 by the district for providing assistance to individual second-year teachers as they went through the portfolio process.

Other Induction Activities. New Britain provides a one-day orientation to all beginning teachers and teachers who are new to the district. At the orientation in August 2000, O'Reilly and then superintendent, James Rhinesmith, provided initial training to new teachers and each novice received a copy of *The First Days of School* by Harry Wong. This book includes instructional and management strategies designed to help establish a productive learning environment at the beginning of the school year. According to O'Reilly, the book is used as a framework "for the kinds of things we talk about – high expectations, classroom management, some instructional strategies, and working as a professional – those are four topics that we try to cover in that orientation session." During the orientation, the teachers were also introduced to the district curriculum coordinators.

The district offers regular workshops for first-year teachers on topics such as classroom management, student assessment, parent involvement, student motivation, and the BEST program. New Britain also provides support to second-year teachers as they go through the BEST portfolio process. At the elementary level, two BEST portfolio scorers met monthly from January through March 2001 with teachers from across the district to discuss the Connecticut teaching standards, selecting and videotaping lessons for the BEST portfolios, analyzing student work, and reflecting on practice. At the March meeting, for example, the scorers and participants examined a literacy unit from a 4th-grade teacher's portfolio.

> Scorer: What were your criteria for success for the unit?
> Teacher: For the discussions in guided reading groups, correct pronunciation, willingness to listen and take turns, strategies that good readers use. For their writing assignment, use of an outline, correct spelling and grammar.
> Scorer: Anything more specific for the two students you targeted for the portfolio?
> Teacher: For student A, fluent reading and comprehension. She's a strong reader and I expect a lot from her. I only meet with her group once a week. For student B, who has more difficulty with reading – initial consonants and chunking, sense-making, using contextual clues. His group needs more attention so I meet with them 3 or 4 days a week.
> Scorer: How did you communicate these criteria to your students?
> Teacher: At the beginning of the unit, I explained that they would receive two grades – one for their contributions in the group discussions and one for their response to the writing assignment. I wrote the specific evaluation criteria on the board and on a sheet I handed out that outlined each lesson in the unit. Then we talked about the criteria as a group to help them internalize them. But these criteria are similar to what I had been doing all year so they should have been familiar to the students.

At the secondary level, two portfolio scorers and a third-year teacher who recently completed her portfolio facilitated a workshop in January 2001 on the portfolio process for all second-year middle school and high school teachers, and provided follow-up assistance in the spring. One second-year teacher, Jerry Patrick, remarked on the January workshop:

> It was the best thing. I thought it was even better than the state seminars. I felt more confident coming out of there than coming out of the state ones. I thought the realism was there. There were real-life people - the state had that, too - but there were real-life people and they weren't lying to you. They were very clear about what's involved with the portfolio requirements.

New Teacher Evaluation. In New Britain, every non-tenured teacher is observed twice each year by a building administrator and once by a central office administrator. Elementary and middle school teachers are observed by their principals while high school teachers are observed by their principals and/or assistant principals. The district's evaluation system was closely modeled after the CCI. Before being observed, teachers were asked to provide information about their lesson plans and their students in the class being observed. In conducting observations, principals

generally focused on 1) instructional delivery, 2) classroom management, and 3) student assessment, although some principals also considered such issues as student learning and teachers' ability to reflect on and modify their practice.

According to Vanda O'Reilly,

> Every building in the district has a central office "buddy." In every school, the principal is the primary supervisor of teachers, but we do have a central office person to help that principal. Before a decision is made on a teacher regarding renewal of a contract, which now takes place by the end of February, we would have all these contacts from mentors, grade-level colleagues, and the principal. In addition, in terms of formal observations, the principal would probably have been in the room twice for a full-length class period with a pre- and post-conference, and a central office coordinator would have been in there once. Those administrators collaborate on the decision, with the major weight of that falling on the principal because they're in the building every day.

As discussed below, some administrators in New Britain addressed content-specific instructional issues in their evaluations and promoted reflective inquiry among new teachers.

Teacher Salaries. Teacher salaries in New Britain are among the highest in the state of Connecticut, and seem to play an important role in the recruitment and retention of qualified teachers. In 2000-01, the first step on the salary scale for teachers with a bachelor's degree was $32,466; the fifth step was $42,425; and the tenth step was $54,873. For teachers with a master's degree, the first step was $35,766; the fifth step was $47,252; and the tenth step was $61,605. Teacher salaries in the district were higher than 1) those in other districts located in close geographic proximity to New Britain as well as 2) those in other ERG I districts.

Teacher Retention. The induction policies and high salaries in New Britain seemed to contribute to high rates of retention among beginning teachers in the district. Of those who started teaching in 1998-99 or 1999-2000 in ERG I districts in Connecticut, 91.2% of those who started in New Britain remained in the district through at least their third year of teaching. In contrast, only 70.1% of those who started teaching in other ERG I districts in 1998-99 or 1999-2000 remained in their district of origin through their third year of teaching. In addition, of those who started teaching in 1998-99, 1999-2000, or 2000-01 in ERG I districts, 90.2% of those who started in New Britain continued to teach in the district in 2001-02. In contrast, only 71.3% of those who started teaching in other ERG I districts in 1998-99, 1999-2000, or 2000-01 were still teaching in their district of origin in 2001-02.

Induction Support for First-Year Teachers

Most first-year teachers in New Britain meet regularly with their mentors to acquire curricular knowledge, plan instruction, and reflect on practice. In 2000-01, many new teachers were observed by their mentors and some also collaborated with grade-level or subject area colleagues. A 5th-grade teacher, Julie Gillis, met frequently with her mentor, a 4th-grade teacher named Meg Nelson, to discuss writing instruction. In the first month of the year, Gillis talked

with Nelson about appropriate short- and long-term objectives for teaching 5th grade. Nelson noted that teachers' goals at the school closely mirror the objectives of the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT).[7]

> With reading, your goal is the higher-level thinking skills. These kids need to be able to respond in writing to fiction and non-fiction, and really the thrust is non-fiction, which is emphasized on the CMTs. I went over that with her, how she can integrate it with her science or social studies.

As the year went on, Gillis' principal, Donna Gordon, recommended that Nelson focus on strategies for teaching writing in her work with her mentee. This recommendation was based on an observation Gordon conducted of Gillis in January and a post-observation conference in which Gillis shared some student writing samples with her principal. As a result, in February, Nelson and Gillis started meeting for 30 minutes on Thursday mornings two to three times a month to discuss writing instruction. Gordon facilitated these meetings by arranging substitute coverage. At one meeting, according to Nelson, the new teacher

> brought a pile of writing prompts. We talked about graphic organizers that would be appropriate. How to deal with small-group instruction. With the low kids, the structure and organization of the piece was still an issue. Working with the higher kids, the focus was on refining the detail part and the elaboration. So we discussed how the focus would be different in those groups. And then we talked about taking that graphic organizer and structuring it even more towards the low group and how to plug in some sentence starters, thinking of some key words for those kids to guide them along with that structure.

Along with addressing writing instruction with Nelson, Gillis had opportunities to discuss her mathematics curriculum with a grade-level colleague, Naomi Stone. On one occasion, for example, Stone helped Gillis plan a lesson on equivalent fractions.

> She gave me an example of – "OK, when you're using two equivalent fractions, have them place things right on top of each other. If something isn't fitting then the students need to examine what's missing, and explain to you what's missing. Have them draw it out even though they've placed them on top of each other. Take those two pieces and draw them out. Then draw them again on top of each other." She really showed me a useful way to teach equivalent fractions.

In addition to receiving assistance from Nelson and Stone, Gillis attended curriculum-mapping meetings for a full day every other month with the five other 5th-grade teachers at the school. Gordon used money from a state grant to pay for substitutes for grade teams to attend these bimonthly meetings which the principal facilitated. In Gillis' words, "It's the whole day where the whole 5th-grade team gets together and we talk about the curriculum from reading, writing, social studies, and math." Nelson added that the purpose of the curriculum mapping was to promote coherence within grades while reducing overlap in what was taught across grades.

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[7] The Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) is administered statewide in reading, writing, and mathematics in 4th and 6th grades.

Gordon served as a BEST portfolio scorer and seminar leader and these experiences significantly influenced her leadership as a principal. In an interview, she discussed how her approach to evaluating teachers drew on both the district's evaluation system as well as the portfolio process. In her view, it was very important for teachers to be able to discuss individual lessons and student learning in the context of entire units.

> When a teacher comes in, I ask them to bring the students' work from that lesson to serve as the basis for our conversation; for us to look at, "Were the goals and objectives of your lesson met? What strategies were helpful to student learning? What strategies maybe prohibited students from learning or needed to be modified or adjusted?" We look at the level of questioning within the lesson or how the discourse or conversation with children went, and what facilitated children learning. It might not have been through teacher strategies, but it might have been student-to-student strategies or other factors. For those children that maybe were not successful, we would ask, what the teacher would do in the rest of the unit to promote their learning?

Like Gillis, other first-year teachers in New Britain received instructional assistance from their assigned mentors as well as other colleagues. For example, a 9th-grade English teacher, John Muldoon, was observed by his mentor, Laura Crenshaw, early in the year and spoke with her afterwards. Crenshaw taught 10th- and 12th-grade English at the same high school as her mentee. According to Muldoon,

> As a mentor, she focused on everything. She scripted what happened so I could see what I was doing, how the students reacted, how I reacted. It helped me remember what I did in class. Then she asked me how I thought things went, whether my lesson worked overall, and whether it worked for particular students who are sometimes hard for me to reach.

Until Crenshaw observed him, Muldoon had been preoccupied with classroom management. In talking with her, he began to see more clearly how his lesson plans and decisions during class could affect student engagement and behavior. He noted, "I'm going to try to incorporate more discussions into my lessons. I've been doing a lot of talking, probably too much, at least with my college tracks."

As a BEST portfolio scorer for the state, Crenshaw understood the importance of considering students' background knowledge and interests in planning instruction. She stressed these issues in one meeting in February.

> Crenshaw: What are you planning to teach next?
> Muldoon: I have a unit on mythology. We're going to study how myths in different cultures are often parallel. I plan to start with creation myths.
> Crenshaw: How will you relate this to students' lives?

> Muldoon: We've had several discussions about cultural differences, but we've also talked about how different cultures sometimes share things in common. They were very interested in this, especially students in my lower classes.
> Crenshaw: Good – you're making the point that beliefs are important part of cultures, not just people's physical attributes. It sounds like this will connect to their interests. What sort of activities do you have in mind?
> Muldoon: I'm going to break each class into four or five groups and have each group read a separate myth, summarize it as a group, and write out the main ideas from the myth on poster paper. When each group presents their poster to the class, I'll ask them two questions: How is your myth similar to other myths? How is your myth different?

Muldoon and Crenshaw worked in a large department – there were 19 English teachers at their high school – that both perceived as being supportive and collegial. Over the course of the year, Muldoon talked with Crenshaw as well as other department colleagues about curricular and instructional issues. He went to a third-year English teacher, Tina Gorrence, in the fall with questions about writing instruction for 9th-graders. She helped him distinguish appropriate goals for his college-track students from appropriate ones for his lower-level students. They discussed how, for lower students, writing instruction should be focused on helping them express their ideas and share their experiences. In contrast, instruction in college-track classes needed to cover writing persuasive essays.

When Muldoon struggled to engage his students during a unit on *Romeo and Juliet*, a colleague, Ben Verdirame, visited his class and conducted two demonstration lessons. According to Muldoon, Verdirame

> is very animated when he talks. He likes to act out the play for the kids. He told me, "They're not going to understand the words right away. You have to act it out for them. They see your actions, they see you do it, they hear you speaking the language. And they connect it to their lives" . . . I've been reading out loud to them and acting, but I can't really do it as well as he does. He came in and actually did two classes for me to show me how he does it. He came in and was there for 40 minutes each time. He plays the roles of different characters and he explains the meaning of the old English.

After watching Verdirame, Muldoon felt he was more effective at engaging his students in *Romeo and Juliet* and other plays. It also helped him understand the value of observing other English teachers to learn about their instructional methods and strategies for motivating students.

Two factors seemed to contribute to Muldoon, Gillis, and other first-year teachers in New Britain acquiring knowledge about curriculum and planning instruction with their assigned mentors as well as other colleagues: first, these teachers worked in collaborative environments with colleagues who were willing to share ideas for units and discuss student learning. Consequently, there was less of a need for them to seek assistance primarily from their mentors than if they had been isolated professionally from subject-area or grade-level colleagues. Second, some mentors,

like Crenshaw, also worked closely with second-year teachers on their portfolios; this affected the amount of time they had available to work with their first-year mentees.

While many first-year teachers in the district worked with both mentors and other colleagues, some worked very closely with their mentors and, therefore, felt little need to seek instructional assistance from other colleagues. For example, a 7th-grade language arts teacher, Shelly Conway, met daily with her mentor, Judy Farrell, throughout the school year to discuss students, plan instruction, and reflect on her practice. Farrell was a special education teacher who worked with several students in Conway's classes. According to Conway, "We officially meet once a week on Friday mornings before school. I also talk with her every day before school or after school." Early in the year, she spoke frequently with Farrell about student behavior. In Conway's words "Classroom management is a big one for me. I want my kids to be perfect at everything. She helps me see the little improvements."

Farrell described her strategies for creating a sense of trust between herself and Conway and her other mentees.

> One of the things I'm conscious of doing is the first time I meet with someone, I just try to get to know them a little bit, just ask them some questions about themselves, including why they were interested in teaching. Some very basic things just to get a feel for them, ask them about their family, about their friends, that kind of thing.

As the year went along, Farrell encouraged Conway – in planning instruction – to consider the relationships among her goals for a unit, her instructional strategies, and her students' backgrounds and ability levels.

In an interview, Farrell noted that she tried to promote reflection among her mentees by asking the following questions:

> "What about your introduction and your initiation, how did you prepare the students for what they're going to be learning? What is it that you wanted them to get out of that lesson today? How did you develop the lesson from the beginning?" and "Were there any changes that you made and how did you adjust for that when so-and-so didn't know the answer to that?" Also, the questioning strategies and "How could you get more kids to participate?" And thinking about wait time and dignifying responses . . . All those things go through my mind constantly when I'm talking about the lesson.

For example, in one meeting, Farrell talked with Conway about how the week had gone.

> Farrell: Let's recap the week. What were your objectives for the reading lesson?
> Conway: I wanted to read the last chapter of *Holes* and talk about the main points of the chapter with them. I really wanted them to think about how it would feel to be at a detention center.
> Farrell: How do you think the lesson went?

> Conway: A lot of them were confused. A lot of the vocabulary words were new for them. I didn't want to slow things down too much because I thought I would lose some of the others.
> Farrell: How could you do it differently in the future?
> Conway: I could go over some of the harder vocabulary words ahead of time. Sometimes I do that, but I thought this book was going to be at their level.
> Farrell: What did you have them do for writing?
> Conway: They had to do a persuasive letter. The kid in *Holes* is at a detention center so they had to be him and write a letter to their parents and try to convince them to get him out.
> Farrell: Do you have other assignments planned for *Holes*?
> Conway: They have projects and they have writing assignments that differ for each project. I gave them about six choices. Some of them chose to write a ballad about a character, some of them chose to write another chapter for the book, some created costumes. One kid created a scene from the book and then he told me physically what was in the scene, and then what action took place in the scene, and then why that was a scene that he chose to create.

Despite their daily contact, the extent to which Conway addressed curricular issues with her mentor was limited because Farrell did not have experience teaching language arts. Nonetheless, Conway felt the support she received from Farrell was very helpful. In her words,

> I feel very lucky that I have Judy as my mentor because I don't think anyone else here has such a good relationship with their mentor. I feel like it wasn't as bad for me as it was for 98% of the first-year teachers . . . I think I would have gone insane if I had just come into here not knowing anyone because I know how stressed I was with her as a resource.

Conway was observed twice by her principal, Ed Nagosta, and once by a district administrator, Al Cooper. In his evaluations, Nagosta attended to student learning as well as Conway's ability to reflect on and modify her teaching. For example, during the principal's second observation, Conway taught a lesson on types of conflict as part of her unit on *The Giver*. Afterwards, he prodded her to consider which students had met her learning objectives, which students had not, and how she could adjust accordingly. Further, Nagosta placed a strong emphasis on opportunities for teacher learning. In an interview, he noted that a key component of improving the school environment is professional development:

> We may not have resources, in many cases we don't because we're a poor area, but if we can have our teachers well-trained - I'll take a well-trained teacher over a lot of other things. My number one priority is teacher development.

A Two-Sided Induction Experience

There were some new teachers in New Britain who had few conversations about curriculum or student learning with their mentors, usually because they taught in different grade levels or content areas. For example, Carolyn Demarest, a 1st-grade teacher, was matched with Lauren

Sterling, a special education teacher at her school. In September, Sterling observed her mentee and felt she needed little assistance. In her words, Demarest had "amazing control, the kids know exactly what they're doing, they have structures and routines, the transitions are great . . . it's amazing to see the first month of 1st grade." Sterling observed Demarest a few more times in October and November, filling out the district's observation form each time. But they rarely met to discuss instructional issues because Sterling had little knowledge of the 1st-grade curriculum. According to the mentor, "As an inclusion teacher, unit/content instruction is not what we do." Sterling's approach to mentoring reflected the notion of induction underlying the CCI, particularly its emphasis on classroom management.

While Demarest felt comfortable managing student behavior, she had many questions throughout the year about the 1st-grade curriculum in language arts and mathematics. The Title I teacher at her school, Carol Little, answered many of her questions about language arts and collaborated with her in planning instruction. Little worked with four of Demarest's students in Reading Recovery during the first half of the year, and helped implement guided reading groups in the new teacher's classroom.

Little added that she spoke frequently with Demarest about individual students, especially the four children in Reading Recovery. One exited from the program in December, according to Little, because "he was reading so well and the other three that started with me in September will discontinue right after the new year. I've never had children exit as quickly."

In mathematics, though, Demarest had more difficulty. She attended a series of district workshops to learn about New Britain's mathematics curriculum, but in the middle of the school year, she still felt confused. In her words,

> There are a bunch of objectives and a bunch of activities, but they are for the whole year. You don't really know which to touch on first. There are assessments to give out afterwards; sometimes, I feel like I'm just teaching to the test.

Neither Sterling nor Little were familiar with the mathematics curriculum and Demarest felt that none of her other colleagues were able to help her in planning mathematics instruction. Like Sterling, Demarest's principal, Anthony Canova, also felt teacher induction and evaluation should focus on students' behavior. In his words,

> Number one, it has to be how they handle the class, classroom management. If you don't have that in place, no matter what else you're doing, it's not going to work. And as far as lesson plans, how they're developed and what the follow-through is; looking at the overall lesson and how it's taught.

This view of induction ignores the fact that student behavior is often related to teachers' ability to incorporate students' backgrounds, interests, and prior learning into their instruction. While Canova applauded the positive learning environment in Demarest's classroom, he did not help her extend her knowledge of the mathematics curriculum or identify ways to promote understanding among students who struggled in mathematics.

Overall, most first-year teachers in New Britain moved beyond concerns about classroom management to address instructional issues with mentors and reflect with them on their practice. In Conway's case, she worked primarily with her mentor while Gillis and Muldoon received support from their mentors as well as other colleagues. As for Demarest, she discussed instructional issues with the Title I teacher at her school. Two factors seemed to influence the extent to which new teachers addressed instructional issues with mentors and colleagues: the nature of principal leadership and teacher collaboration. Gordon and Nagosta enacted strong instructional leadership by facilitating the work of mentors at their schools and addressing pedagogical issues with first-year teachers themselves. At Muldoon's school, collaboration was very strong among colleagues in the English department. On the other hand, principal leadership and teacher collaboration were weaker at the school where Demarest worked.

Induction Support for Second-Year Teachers

Second-year teachers in New Britain have access to extensive support as they go through the BEST portfolio process. The district held workshops in January 2001 to ensure that second-year teachers were aware of the portfolio requirements, and many worked closely in winter 2001 with their mentors and/or portfolio scorers in the district to plan units, videotape their instruction, examine student work samples, and reflect on their teaching. At the elementary level, two portfolio scorers met monthly with a group of second-year teachers to discuss their portfolios. At their March meeting, shortly before the deadline for completing the assessment, they discussed the drafts of several teachers' portfolios. At this meeting, a 3rd-grade teacher received feedback from the scorers and other teachers on her literacy unit.

> Scorer A: What were your objectives for this unit?
> Teacher 1: To have them work successfully in guided reading groups, participate in a whole-group discussion, and create text innovations.
> Scorer A: How did you monitor student learning during the unit?
> Teacher 1: I kept index cards and they worked really well. I should use them more.
> Scorer B: How would you describe student learning during the lesson on text innovations?
> Teacher 1: Most students did well and were ready for the next lesson. One of my target students did well, but the other wasn't ready for the next lesson.
> Scorer A: In your portfolio, it's important to bridge these statements with examples from the cards. Are you looking for something specific from the cards for each student?
> Teacher 1: I'm keeping notes on the target students and other students I have concerns about. When I learn something surprising about a higher-level student, I write that down, too.
> Scorer B: What did you communicate to students about how you would assess their work?
> Teacher 1: I told the students about the rubric for the text innovation, and they already knew my expectations for the guided reading groups and the whole-class discussion.

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Teacher 2: I have a question because I'm struggling with this: How will you adjust your teaching for the class as a whole or your target students?
Teacher 1: For the class, I'm going to keep the same guided reading groups and the same format. I'm going to continue to monitor the progress of student B; I want him to identify specific words.
Scorer B: Or specific sounds. From your index cards, it looks like he is still learning some sounds.
Teacher 1: That's true. I guess I need to be clear about that in my reflections.
Scorer A: With the whole class, is there a pattern in terms of student performance?
Teacher 1: Many children showed remarkable strength in comprehension. Student A, for example, did really well.
Scorer A: If you go back to your criteria, many of them went above and beyond; what does that mean for your future instruction? What else are you going to do with them?
Teacher 1: There will be an assignment on sentence writing skills. Many still need to work on that. The extension activities will focus on spelling and grammar.

This excerpt demonstrates some of the ways in which portfolio scorers in New Britain analyzed student learning with second-year teachers and reflected with them on their practice. By requiring teachers to focus on two students of different ability levels as they work on their portfolios, the state leads them to consider whether and how their objectives, instructional strategies, and assessments address the backgrounds and learning styles of individual students. Further, interacting with scorers and/or others who understand the state's teaching standards and portfolio requirements can enable second-year teachers to see how the tasks they must do for the portfolio can be incorporated into their instruction.

While many second-year teachers worked with these two scorers on a monthly basis, two elementary teachers at the same school, Rich Simmons and Stephanie Kingsley, had regular contact with their mentors, other colleagues, and their principal, Donna Gordon, as they went through the portfolio process. Meg Nelson served as mentor for Simmons, a 5th-grade teacher, who was new to the district in 2000-01. Early in the school year, Nelson talked with Simmons about school policies related to grading, discipline, and parent conferences. They also discussed the scope and sequence of the 5th-grade language arts curriculum in New Britain. With regard to mathematics, Simmons felt the district's 5th-grade mathematics curriculum was "pretty explicit as to what you should have done by what date - we have a resource person who is here on a weekly basis." He noted, "When I was beginning to plan my numeracy unit, I met with Meg to review my objectives, where I was starting and where I was planning to end." He added that they later "talked about lessons I had done for my portfolio and my reflections of what I would do differently or what I wish I had done differently."

As the year went on, Simmons discussed instructional issues and reflected on practice extensively with Gordon, who served as a BEST portfolio scorer and seminar leader for the state. According to Simmons, he relied on his principal "a great deal. I find her to be an excellent, excellent source of support. She's very non-threatening . . . Some of my journal entries, I've

dropped off and she's given back to me a week or so later with some comments." The most challenging part of the portfolio for Simmons was related to the fact that

> some of the concepts that I have about teaching are so built-in that it's hard for me to pull them out and present them on paper. Gordon is very familiar with my teaching style and what I'm doing in my classroom. When she reads over my journals, she knows things that were probably there but that I'm not indicating. She questions it. It will make me think that I need to add more.

Following classroom observations, Simmons noted that Gordon asked teachers to bring examples of students' writing or problem solving in mathematics to post-conferences. During these meetings,

> she draws from you what you think went well and what you think didn't go well. If you happen to not pick up on something that should have happened or should have been done, she points it out to you . . . it's not in a belittling way; it's food for thought, something to think about for the future.

Simmons added that his principal was adept at scrutinizing student work to ascertain whether he had met his instructional objectives for a given unit or whether some students had not assimilated the skills or concepts he was trying to teach.

From Gordon's perspective, her most important role as a principal was to provide instructional leadership. In her words,

> My greatest purpose as a principal is as an instructional leader to really support teachers instructionally, understanding child development, curriculum, curriculum-related issues, certainly there are lots of other tasks that go along with administration, but I would say that that's the most important role that I play.

For her part, Kingsley, a 1st-grade teacher, received a lot of moral support from her mentor, Judy Gilman, in her first year of teaching. As a kindergarten teacher, though, Gilman taught a much different curriculum, which led Kingsley to seek out other sources of assistance. For example, she frequently discussed the scope and sequence of the 1st-grade language arts curriculum with Pam Belkin, another 1st-grade teacher at her school. Kingsley, who grew up and went to school in New Britain, had known Belkin for several years. During Kingsley's second year, Belkin helped her select a unit for the literacy portion of her portfolio. Kingsley also attended monthly curriculum mapping meetings with Belkin and the other 1st-grade teachers at the school.

Kingsley added that Gordon had frequently helped her to reflect on her teaching as part of the teacher evaluation process. After her observations, she "asks you thought-provoking questions so you can analyze it yourself, but yet they are helping you and making you reflect."

Kingsley attended three BEST seminars in the spring of her first year and three more seminars in fall 2000. She "found them to be helpful because I saw examples of videotapes and got to ask questions of people that went through the program." After each seminar, Kingsley had an

opportunity to meet with Gordon, Simmons, and one other teacher at the school who was going through the portfolio process. She found these meetings very useful "because we had more one-to-one attention and we had our handbooks. We could ask specific questions right there."

At the secondary level, Richards arranged a workshop in January related to the portfolio process for all second-year middle school and high school teachers in New Britain. The workshop was facilitated by two high school teachers, Laura Crenshaw and Jack Matlock, who had scored portfolios for the state and a third-year teacher, Tina Gorrence, who had gone through the assessment process in 1999-2000 and earned a "4" on her portfolio. Christine Gulliver, a second-year high school English teacher, attended this workshop and worked closely with Crenshaw and Gorrence as she completed her portfolio.

Gulliver's first year was extremely challenging for a number of reasons: she had several very challenging classes, her classroom was located in a different part of the school from other English teachers, and she received little help with instruction or classroom management from her mentor or her principal. In 2000-01, the new principal at her school, Phil Silvio, moved Gulliver to a classroom that was much closer to other teachers in the English department. Further, Gulliver had frequent opportunities to discuss instructional issues with other colleagues, particularly Crenshaw and Gorrence. After the January workshop, Gulliver talked with Crenshaw one-on-one about "what she thinks are the most important things for me to focus on in my portfolio. After my first few lessons, I brought in my daily logs to her and she read through them and made suggestions. I can bounce ideas off of her."

In her second year, Gulliver frequently shared ideas and materials with Gorrence, who also taught 10th-grade English and had a similar teaching style. According to Gorrence,

> we have pretty much the same schedule this year. And we have similar philosophies. She may try a unit before I do and share ideas with me, or tell me what's working and it may or may not be something that I've done before. And vice versa. So we're constantly sharing materials and reflecting on our practice.

For a unit on Elie Wiesel's *Night,* Gulliver talked with Gorrence about her objectives and how to accomplish them. In Gulliver's words, she wanted to do

> a character study of minor roles – looking at the elements of characterization to examine their reactions or the effects of the Holocaust on them. I wanted the students to come to the conclusion that different people react differently – some are in a state of denial, some lose their faith, some find their faith strengthened, some go insane.

While Gulliver and many other secondary teachers in New Britain worked with portfolio scorers and content colleagues as they went through the portfolio process, other second-year teachers received support from mentors and colleagues, but did not seek further assistance from scorers in the district. For example, the January workshop helped Jerry Patrick, a 7th-grade language arts teacher, understand the rigorous nature of the portfolio requirements. As he worked on the portfolio, Patrick received support from his mentor, another colleague, and his principal. He

talked with his mentor, Benita Sawchuk, who taught 8th-grade language arts, about teaching *The Contender* for his portfolio unit.

> I told her – it was my idea what I wanted to do – but she did give me some materials. I wanted to teach a certain book that I like, *The Contender*. I feel that it's very appropriate for this age group – they can relate to the protagonist. She was very supportive. She provided some materials related to the book. I rewrote a lot of my own things for it.

Patrick felt supported by his principal, Ed Nagosta, as he went through the portfolio process. In his words,

> Sometimes when I had questions about the portfolio, I would go to the principal. He was able to answer some of the questions. For me, he has been great. If I have an issue, I can go in there. He is supportive, too, with the discipline.

Nagosta told Patrick and other second-year teachers at Pelham that it was acceptable to take personal days off to work on their portfolios. The principal noted, "I push very hard every year so that they get their portfolios done early so you don't have that rush at the end. The last few weeks can be enormously stressful if you are still trying to finish." Patrick and several other teachers at the school finished their portfolios a few weeks before they were due.

Overall, second-year teachers in New Britain addressed instructional issues and portfolio requirements with mentors and/or BEST portfolio scorers. Simmons and Kingsley planned instruction and reflected on practice with Gordon, their principal; Gulliver worked closely with Crenshaw and Gorrence, colleagues in her department; and Patrick received support from his mentor, Sawchuk, and another colleague, Farrell. The high quality of the assistance provided by Gordon, Crenshaw, Gorrence, and Sawchuk was related to their knowledge of the portfolio requirements and to their view that induction involved subject-specific instructional assistance.

In contrast to Bristol, district policy in New Britain related to mentor assignment and work conditions appeared to have less impact on the nature and quality of second-year teachers' induction experiences. Instead, these experiences were strongly shaped by the assistant superintendent's efforts to arrange portfolio-related professional development for second-year teachers and to ensure that they had access to scorers as they went through the portfolio process.

As with first-year teachers in New Britain, principal leadership had a significant influence on second-year teachers. Gordon worked directly with Simmons and Kingsley on their portfolios, Nagosta provided release time for Patrick, and Silvio facilitated instructional support for Gulliver by moving her to a different classroom at the beginning of her second year.

Chapter V - Connections Between District Induction Policy and Induction Support for Beginning Teachers

This chapter looks across Bristol, New Britain, and other districts in Connecticut in discussing the impact of different aspects of district induction policy on the experiences of first- and second-year teachers. In Bristol and New Britain, the high quality of induction support seemed related to district policy related to mentor assignment and work conditions, professional development for second-year teachers, and strong instructional leadership among many principals. *In both districts, induction practices combined with high teacher salaries to keep teacher attrition and migration at low levels.*

District Policy Related to Mentor Assignment, Work Conditions, Selection, and Training

In Bristol and New Britain, district policy related to *mentor assignment* seems to influence the nature and quality of the support received by new teachers. Each new teacher in Bristol has access to an assigned senior or peer advisor who teaches the same grade level or content area. This increases the likelihood that first- and second-year teachers will acquire curricular knowledge from their advisors, plan instruction, and reflect on practice with them. In New Britain, most new teachers are assigned to mentors who teach in the same content area or grade level. As a result, most first-year teachers are able to address questions about curriculum, instruction, or student learning with their assigned mentors. On the other hand, new teachers in some districts in Connecticut are not matched with mentors who teach in the same grade level or content area. When mentors and mentees have different teaching assignments, the likelihood that they will discuss instructional issues is decreased.

In Bristol, district policy related to *mentors' work conditions* appears to affect the quality of support experienced by new teachers. Senior advisors in Bristol are paid $3,000 to work with three to five new teachers over a two-year period, and they receive two release days to observe their advisees and hold post-observation meetings with them. Compensation seems to lead both senior advisors and peer advisors to take their roles seriously. While teaching full-time, most senior advisors devote significant amounts of time to assisting second-year teachers with their portfolios or helping first-year teachers move beyond concerns about student behavior to examine student learning and reflect on their practice. As for peer advisors, many planned to apply for senior advisor positions in the district and believed their candidacies would be strengthened by learning about the portfolio requirements and providing extensive support to their advisees.

In contrast to Bristol, some districts in Connecticut do not compensate experienced teachers for serving as mentors. This tends to discourage veteran teachers from participating in the BEST support teacher training and serving as mentors, especially when salary supplements are available for serving in other roles such as department chairs, athletic coaches, and student club advisors. In addition, when mentors are not paid, those teachers who become mentors may feel less incentive to maintain current knowledge of state teaching standards and portfolio requirements or establish trusting relationships with their mentees. While New Britain does not compensate mentors, it pays portfolio scorers to work with second-year teachers, which has important consequences for the portfolio process (discussed below).

In Bristol and New Britain, the design of district policy related to *mentor selection* is similar to that in other districts in the state. In selecting mentors, most districts in Connecticut emphasize teachers' instructional expertise and ability to work with other adults. At the same time, there are important variations in the implementation of mentor selection policy across districts. Bristol's decision to compensate senior advisors and assign each of them to three to five new teachers has decreased the demand for state-trained BEST mentors in the district. As a result, the district's selection committee receives an abundance of applications for the senior advisor positions each year.

New Britain usually has a sufficient number of experienced teachers willing to mentor new teachers, which is a function in part of the strong commitment to induction in the district. This commitment is reflected in the large number of veteran teachers in New Britain who have scored BEST portfolios, served as CCI assessors for the state, and/or served as instructional coaches for the district. In contrast to Bristol and New Britain, some districts in Connecticut receive much fewer applications for mentor positions each year. This can lead to experienced teachers being selected as mentors who have not demonstrated instructional expertise or the ability to collaborate with others.

District policy related to *mentor training* is similar across districts in Connecticut because all mentors are required by the state to participate in 24 hours of BEST support teacher training. Like some other districts, Bristol and New Britain supplement this training by arranging opportunities for experienced mentors to attend update sessions in order to learn about the state's relatively new teaching standards and portfolio requirements. Many mentors and other educators in both districts are also trained as portfolio scorers although this is not a function of district policy. In contrast, some districts in Connecticut have much fewer mentors who are familiar with the teaching standards and portfolio requirements.

District Policy Related to Support for Second-Year Teachers

Both New Britain and Bristol provide structured support to second-year teachers as they go through the BEST portfolio process. In New Britain, portfolio scorers facilitate workshops that address the portfolio requirements and offer follow-up assistance as teachers complete these assessments. In 2001-02, scorers were paid $150 by the district for providing at least six hours of assistance to a second-year teachers working on their portfolio. This portfolio-related assistance seems to increase the likelihood that second-year teachers will view the assessment process as a learning experience and continue teaching in New Britain. Further, district policy in this area promotes collaboration and reflective practice among teachers within schools and across the district.

Many second-year teachers in Bristol plan portfolio units with their senior advisors or peer advisors, analyze student work, and reflect on practice with them. By assigning multiple individuals to each new teacher, as opposed to matching them with a single mentor, the district increases the likelihood that new teachers will establish a trusting relationship with at least one experienced colleague who can assist them as they go through this assessment process.

Effective Instructional Leadership

In many schools in Bristol and New Britain, district policy related to *teacher evaluation* interacted with effective *principal leadership* to positively influence new teachers' experiences. The design of teacher evaluation policy is similar across Bristol and New Britain as each district employs evaluation instruments based on the Connecticut Competency Instrument (CCI) and each requires first- and second-year teachers to be observed and evaluated at least three times by administrators. In Bristol, non-tenured teachers are held to high standards across the district through the use of strict procedures for principals in terms of conducting evaluations and reporting their results, and there is a particular emphasis in evaluation on content-specific instructional skills. Although there is more variation in teacher evaluation standards and procedures across New Britain, many principals in the district focus on content-specific pedagogy in their work with new teachers. In Bristol, most school leaders are knowledgeable about the BEST portfolios and view induction as involving subject-specific instructional assistance.

For a number of school leaders in Bristol, the conception of induction underlying the portfolios was consistent with their existing beliefs about teacher learning and school improvement. Before coming to Connecticut, Rachel Vance had worked as an elementary school teacher and principal in Oregon, where she completed a Ph.D. in instructional supervision and later served as a curriculum director for a district. In her words, "If you really want to be engaged in staff development, I realized that the place where you can really make a difference is right here in the principal's office, working with the teachers." While Vance attends to management issues during post-observation conferences with new teachers, she also promotes their growth by examining student work and reflecting on practice with them. Further, she enacted a distributed style of leadership by having a portfolio scorer at her school, Paula Gottlieb, discuss the portfolio requirements with second-year teachers and provide them with follow-up support.

A high school principal in Bristol, Eldon Lanier, had implemented several reforms at his school in the 1990s based on the work of the Coalition of Essential Schools, a national school reform network. In particular, Lanier initiated block scheduling, interdisciplinary teams, increased use of student performance assessments, and a house system. During conversations with a portfolio scorer at his school, Kendra Ford, in 1999-2000, he developed a strong understanding of the portfolio requirements. In particular, he believed that the emphasis on student learning in the portfolios was consistent with his efforts to have teachers attend more to student engagement and understanding. For example, during his informal observations of teachers in 2000-01 – part of his evaluation by the superintendent – Lanier concentrated on student engagement and how it was affected by teachers' learning objectives and strategies, and by teachers' use of higher-order questions.

Many principals in New Britain also address content-specific pedagogy with new teachers. For Ed Nagosta, the notion of induction embedded in the portfolios complemented his belief in the importance of teacher professional development. In observations and post-conferences, he goes beyond the district's evaluation instrument to examine student learning with teachers. For second-year teachers, he provides release days for them to work on their portfolios. Nagosta's

views about induction are reinforced by the district's commitment to make scorers available to teachers as they went through the portfolio process.

Another principal in New Britain, Donna Gordon, incorporates aspects of the portfolio process into her approach to teacher evaluation. In particular, she often videotapes her teachers' classroom practices and analyzes samples of student work with them. She also facilitated monthly workshops in winter 2001 for second-year elementary teachers in the district (discussed above) that addressed the state's teaching standards and portfolio requirements. Gordon was intimately familiar with the conception of teaching underlying the elementary education portfolio, having worked closely with CSDE to develop it.

Along with new teacher evaluation, another aspect of district policy in Bristol seemed to affect the experiences of new teachers. The district and the Bristol Federation of Teachers express little tolerance for inadequate instructional performance on the part of experienced teachers. Principals and instructional supervisors work closely with those veterans whose practice is unsatisfactory. If their practice improves, they are invited to continue teaching in Bristol, but if they fail to improve the quality of their instruction, they are not permitted to continue teaching in the district.

Such high standards for experienced teachers influence beginning teachers in two ways: first, new teachers are treated equitably; i.e., at the same time that they are held to a rigorous standard, veteran teachers are also being held to a similarly high standard. Second, the district's intervention process decreases the likelihood that a new teacher's experience will be tainted by a colleague who is burned out, has low expectations for students, and is very negative about the profession.

Conclusion

In conclusion, district policy related to mentor assignment, mentors' work conditions, and support for second-year teachers interacts with effective principal leadership in Bristol and New Britain to positively influence the induction experiences of many beginning teachers. First-year teachers in both districts have extensive opportunities to acquire curricular knowledge, plan instruction, and reflect on practice with BEST-trained mentors and other colleagues. As they go through the portfolio process, second-year teachers in Bristol and New Britain receive comprehensive support from mentors and BEST portfolio scorers.

As a result of district induction policy as well as high teacher salaries, attrition and migration have been relatively low among new teachers in both Bristol and New Britain. The percentages of teachers who remain in Bristol (87.3%) and New Britain (91.2%) through their first three years of teaching are significantly higher than other urban districts in Connecticut and across the United States that serve students from similar socioeconomic backgrounds.

Appendix

Educational Reference Groups (ERGs) in Connecticut

CSDE employs a classification system involving Educational Reference Groups (ERGs) in order to group together school districts that serve public school students from similar socioeconomic (SES) backgrounds. Grouping similar districts together enables CSDE to make legitimate comparisons among districts. Seven variables are used to categorize districts into ERGs. These variables include income, education, occupation, poverty, family structure, home language, and district enrollment. All variables are based upon families with children attending public school.

The seven districts in ERG I have the lowest SES levels and highest need levels of all groups. Median family income is below $25,000 and is significantly lower than any other group. Further, this group's percentage of children from single-parent families (51.4%), percent of children receiving AFDC (42.6%), and percent of families who do not speak English at home (37.4%) are significantly higher than any other group. Average enrollment in ERG I districts is just above 13,000.

There are 14 districts in ERG H. The median family income of this group ($40,000) is similar to that in ERG G. At the same time, this group's percentage of children from single-parent families (28.9%), percentage of children receiving AFDC (17.6%), and percentage of families who do not speak English at home (12.7%) are significantly higher than Group G and significantly lower than Group I. Average enrollment in ERG I districts is just under 6,000.

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